

IMPACT



NO. 7
FEB.-MAR.

LN 10



10¢

SHOCK

SUSPENSTORIES

JOLTING TALES OF
TENSION

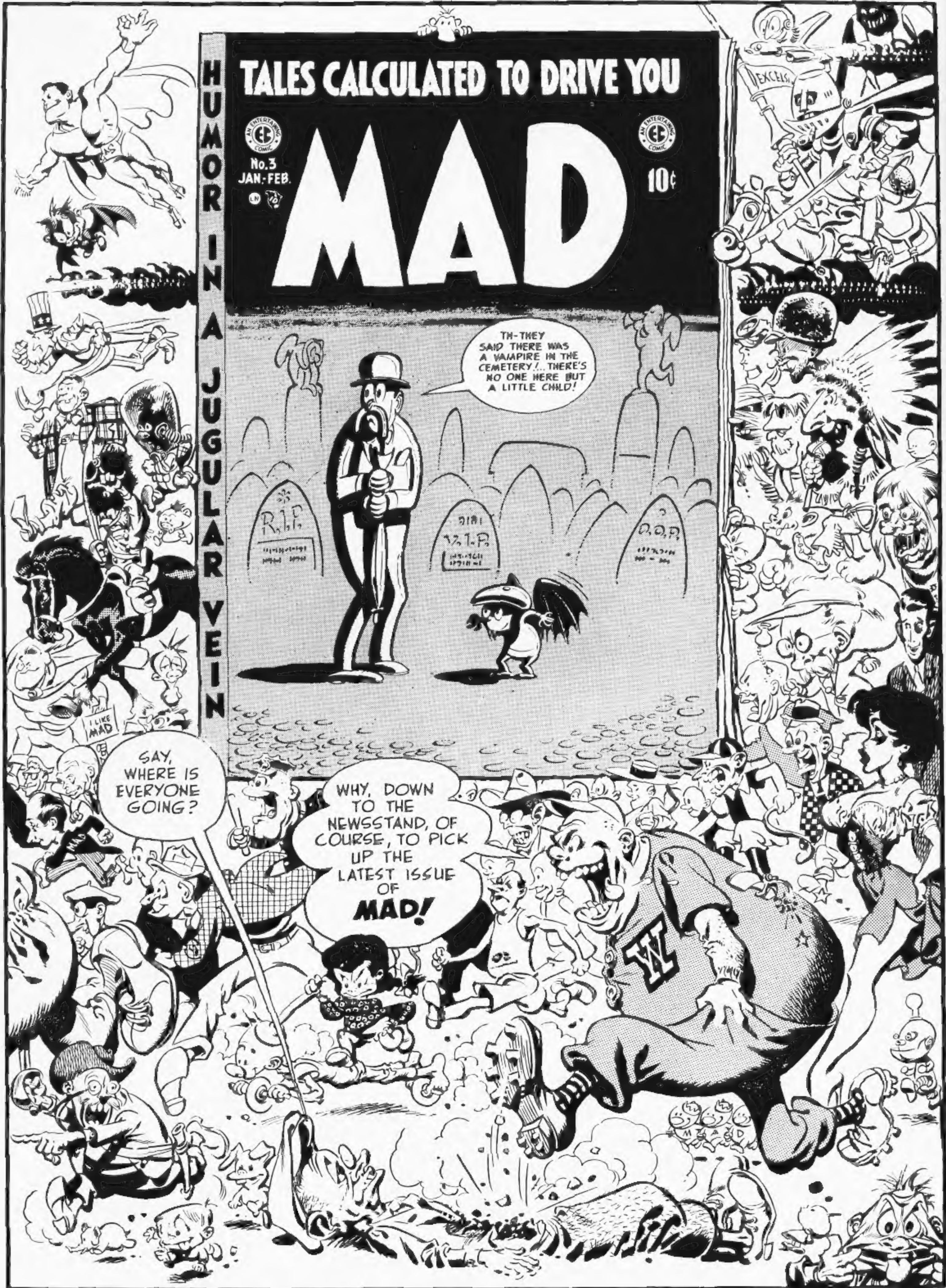
IN THE



TRADITION!



IN THIS ISSUE:
E.C.'S ADAPTATION OF A STORY BY
RAY BRADBURY



TALES CALCULATED TO DRIVE YOU

NO. 3
JAN.-FEB.
10¢

10¢

HUMOR IN A JUGULAR VEIN

TH- THEY
SAID THERE WAS
A VAMPIRE IN THE
CEMETERY!... THERE'S
NO ONE HERE BUT
A LITTLE CHILD!

SAY,
WHERE IS
EVERYONE
GOING?

WHY, DOWN
TO THE
NEWSSTAND, OF
COURSE, TO PICK
UP THE
LATEST ISSUE
OF
MAD!

Shock SuspenStories, Feb.-Mar., 1953—Vol. 1, No. 7. Published Bi-Monthly by Tiny Tot Comics, Inc., at 225 Lafayette St., New York 12, N. Y. William M. Gaines, Managing Editor. Albert B. Feldstein Editor. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. One year subscription in the U. S. 60c plus 15c for packing and mailing—total 75c. Elsewhere \$1.00. Entire contents copyrighted 1952 by Tiny Tot Comics, Inc. Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by stamped return envelope. No similarity between any of the characters, names or persons appearing in this magazine with any of those living or dead is intended, and any such similarity is purely coincidental. Printed in U. S. A.

THE SHOCKING FINAL TWIST TO THIS
ELECTRIFYING TALE WILL TERRIFY YOU!

BEAUTY AND THE BEACH!

JOHN MILTON LOOKED AROUND UNCOMFORTABLY AT THE MEN WATCHING HIS WIFE MARY! SHE KNELT UPON THE DAZZLING WHITE SAND BEACH, CRITICALLY SURVEYING HER MAKE-UP IN A SMALL COMPACT MIRROR, EACH TURN OF HER CURVACIOUS FIGURE REVEALED INTIMATELY BY THE SCANT TWO-PIECE BATHING SUIT SHE WORE...

MARY! FOR PETE'S SAKE!
PUT ON A BEACH-ROBE!
THAT... THAT BATHING SUIT
IS ALMOST OBSCENE!
PEOPLE ARE LOOKING
AT YOU...

OH, TAKE IT EASY,
JOHNNY! I LIKE
PEOPLE TO LOOK
AT ME! I'VE GOT
A NICE FIGURE!
WHY SHOULDN'T
I SHOW IT OFF?

PERCY FULLMAN WRINKLED HIS NOSE IN DISGUST AS, FROM HIS HIDING PLACE IN THE SHADE OF THE BEACH CHAIR, HE STUDIED HIS WIFE, GINGER! SHE SAT ON THE BLANKET IN THE BLAZING SUN, STROKING HER TANNED ARMS AND SHOULDERS, SPREADING THE TACKY, PERFUMED SUN-TAN OIL OVER THEM...

LET'S GO HOME, GINGER!
YOU KNOW HOW I HATE
THE BEACH! WE'VE BEEN
HERE THREE HOURS
ALREADY...

OH, SHUT UP, PERCY!
I LOVE THE SUN! I
WANT TO GET A GOOD
SUN-TAN! READ A
BOOK OR SOMETHING,
HUH?



**A CRIME
SUSPENSE STORY**

THE TWO COUPLES HAD SPREAD THEIR BLANKETS SCARCELY TEN FEET FROM EACH OTHER ON THE CROWDED BEACH! JOHN AND MARY MILTON... SHE SHOWING OFF HER ATTRACTIVE FIGURE, AND HE FUMING, EMBARRASSED AND JEALOUS...

IT ISN'T *NICE*, MARY! I'M YOUR *HUSBAND*! NO ONE SHOULD SEE YOU UNDRESSED LIKE THAT... EXCEPT ME...

DON'T BE SO *POSSESSIVE*, JOHN! I'M NOT ONE OF YOUR *STAMP ALBUMS*...



...AND GINGER AND PERCY FULLMAN... SHE ADORING THE SUN, BASKING IN IT, AND HE COWERING, FULLY DRESSED, BENEATH THE BEACH CHAIR CANOPY...

GINGER! *PLEASE!* IT'S SO *HOT!* I DON'T SEE HOW YOU CAN *SIT* OUT THERE SO *LONG!* I'M *SOAKING WET* FROM *PERSPIRATION!*

OH, GO SOAK YOUR *HEAD*, PERCY! NO *WONDER* YOU'RE SO *HOT!* LOOK AT YOU! *SHIRT...TROUSERS... SOCKS...SHOES... HAT!* NO *WONDER*...



BUT, GINGER! I *HAVE* TO DRESS LIKE THIS! YOU *KNOW* WHAT HAPPENS TO ME IF I GET THE *LEAST LITTLE BIT SUNBURNED!*

THEN JUST SUFFER IN *SILENCE*, PERCY! I *WANT* TO GET *SUNBURNED!* I *LOVE* IT...

MARY! I DON'T *LIKE* MEN TO LOOK AT YOU! I CAN JUST *IMAGINE* WHAT THEY'RE *THINKING!*

CAN YOU? WELL, A GIRL LIKES TO KNOW SHE HASN'T LOST HER APPEAL TO *OTHERS...* AND THAT HER HUSBAND CAN STILL GET *JEALOUS!*

OH, DEAR! I'M ALL OUT OF *SUN-TAN OIL*, PERCY! RUN AND GET ME *ANOTHER BOTTLE*, WILL YOU?

HUH? BUT THE CONCES- SION IS WAY OVER *THERE!* I'LL HAVE TO WALK IN THE *SUN...*



WHERE ARE THE *KIDS*, MARY? I DON'T *SEE* THEM!

HOW SHOULD I *KNOW?* I THOUGHT *YOU* WERE WATCHING THEM!

THERE THEY ARE... DOWN BY THE *WATER!* I'LL *GET* THEM! I... OH, EXCUSE ME!

EXCUSE *ME!* IT WAS *MY FAULT!* I'M *SORRY!*



AND SO JOHN MILTON'S AND PERCY FULLMAN'S PATHS CROSS... THERE ON THAT CROWDED BEACH! WILL THEIR PATHS CROSS AGAIN... AT SOME FUTURE DATE? PERHAPS! LET'S SEE...

I BEG YOUR **PARDON**, MA'AM! I... I COULDN'T HELP **ADMIRING** YOUR BEAUTIFUL **FACE** AND **FIGURE**! ALLOW ME TO **INTRODUCE** MYSELF...

LOOK, CHUM! MY HUSBAND DOESN'T LIKE STRANGERS TO **LOOK** AT ME, NO LESS **TALK** TO ME!

PLEASE DON'T GET ME **WRONG**, MA'AM! MY NAME IS **CEDRIC ABELS**! I'M A **PUBLICITY** MAN! WHAT I WANT TO **TALK** TO YOU ABOUT IS **STRICTLY BUSINESS**!

WELL, YOU'D BETTER TALK **FAST**, MR. ABELS! MY HUSBAND WILL BE **BACK** SHORTLY!



I COULDN'T HELP **OVERHEARING** YOU TELL YOUR HUSBAND TO BUY A BOTTLE OF '**BRONZE-BURN SUN-TAN OIL**', MA'AM! ALLOW ME TO **INTRODUCE** MYSELF...

NICE LINE, MISTER, BUT **NO DICE**! PERCY MAY **LOOK** PUNY, BUT HE'S GOT A **HORRIBLE TEMPER**!

OH, **NO**! I'M **NOT**... WELL... IT ISN'T **THAT** AT ALL! MY NAME IS **TOM SIMMENS**! I'M A **DIRECTOR** FOR A **BIG ADVERTISING AGENCY**! '**BRONZE-BURN**' IS OUR **CLIENT**! THIS IS **STRICTLY BUSINESS**!

OH! I'M **SORRY**. WHAT DO YOU **WANT**? A **TESTIMONIAL**?



... AND EVERY YEAR, I RUN THE '**THE MOST BEAUTIFUL HOUSE-WIFE IN AMERICA CONTEST**' DOWN IN ATLANTIC CITY! NOW **COULDN'T**! I'M SURE, IF **YOU** ENTERED IT... **COMPLIMENT**...

OH, I **COULDN'T**! THANKS FOR THE **COMPLIMENT**...

... BUT **JOHNNY** WOULDN'T **LIKE** IT AT ALL!

YOU'D HAVE A **GOOD CHANCE** OF **WINNING**, MRS. MILTON! THINK WHAT IT WOULD **MEAN**...

NOT A **TESTIMONIAL**, MA'AM! I'D LIKE YOU TO BECOME '**THE BRONZE-BURN GIRL**'! I'D LIKE TO BUILD A **BIG ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN** AROUND YOU!

WHY, I'M **FLATTERED**, MR. SIMMENS! BUT **PERCY**...





...TREMENDOUS PUBLICITY, MRS. MILTON! PERHAPS A CHANCE AT A HOLLYWOOD CAREER...

I DON'T KNOW...



...A LOT OF MONEY, MRS. FULLMAN! YOUR PICTURE WOULD BE IN EVERY NATIONAL MAGAZINE!

I DON'T KNOW...



THINK IT OVER MRS. MILTON! HERE'S MY CARD...

THINK IT OVER MRS. FULLMAN! HERE'S MY CARD...



WHO WAS THAT MAN YOU WERE TALKING TO, MARY? I SAW HIM GO AWAY AS I CAME...

HIM? I... I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT IT WHEN WE GET HOME! C'MON!



I SAW YOU TALKING TO HIM, GINGER! WHO WAS HE?

I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT IT... BUT NOT NOW! LET'S GO...



THAT NIGHT, IN THE MILTON HOME, AFTER THE CHILDREN WERE PUT TO BED...

WHAT? MY WIFE DISPLAYING HERSELF LIKE A COMMON... A COMMON... I WON'T HAVE IT! I WON'T HAVE MEN STARING AT YOU WHILE YOU PARADE AROUND PRACTICALLY UNDRESSED!

WELL I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU'LL HAVE! IT'S MY BIG CHANCE AND I'M TAKING IT!



WHILE ACROSS TOWN, AT THE FULLMAN RESIDENCE...

GO AHEAD! MAKE A FOOL OF YOURSELF! 'THE BRONZE-BURN GIRL.' BAH! YOU AND YOUR STUPID SUN-BATHING! WELL, DON'T EXPECT ME TO FOLLOW YOU AROUND...

IT'S MY BIG CHANCE AND I'M TAKING IT! AND YOU'RE COMING WITH ME!

SOON AFTERWARD, IN ATLANTIC CITY, NEW JERSEY...

AND NOW, THE *WINNER* OF 'THE MOST BEAUTIFUL HOUSEWIFE IN AMERICA' CONTEST... MRS. MARY MILTON...

HOLD IT MRS. MILTON!



WHILE, SOMEWHERE SOUTH, ON A HOT BEACH UNDER THE BLAZING SUN...

TURN YOUR HEAD *THIS* WAY, MRS. FULLMAN.

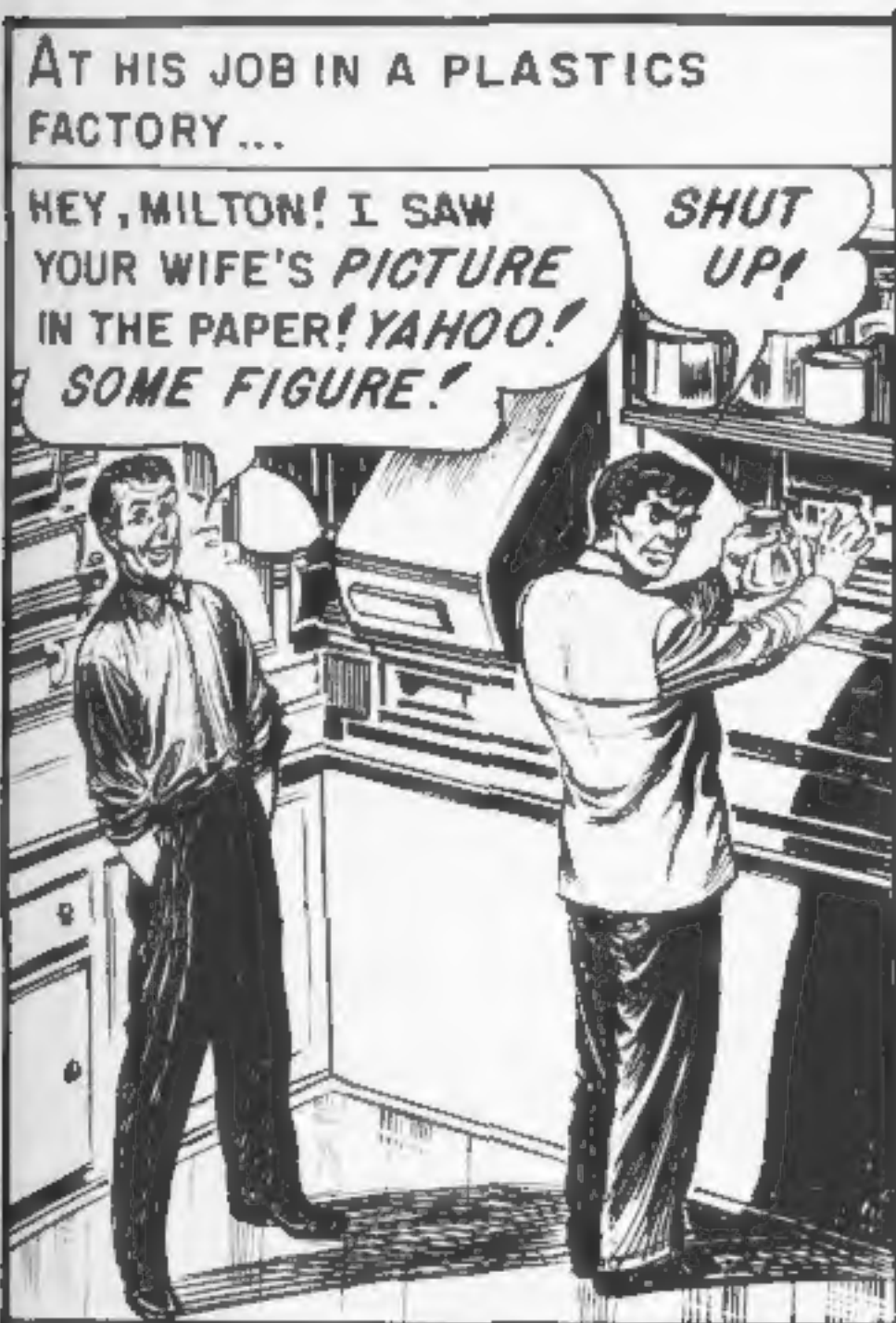
SMILE, MRS. FULLMAN!



AT HIS JOB IN A PLASTICS FACTORY...

HEY, MILTON! I SAW YOUR WIFE'S PICTURE IN THE PAPER! YAHOO! SOME FIGURE!

SHUT UP!



AS, ON A BEACH...

THAT'S *THE BRONZE-BURN GIRL*! AND THAT'S HER HUSBAND...

HE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE HE'S ENJOYING HIMSELF!



DADDY! WHEN IS MOMMY COMING HOME?

SOON, CHILDREN! SOON! NOW, EAT YOUR DINNER!



I CAN'T *STAND* IT ANY LONGER, GINGER! *EVERY DAY*... OUT IN THE *HOT SUN*! I CAN'T *STAND* IT!

I'M MAKING *MORE MONEY NOW* THAN YOU'LL *EVER* MAKE... SO YOU'LL JUST *HAVE* TO STAND IT! I'M *NOT* GIVING IT UP!



WHAT DO YOU *MEAN*, YOU'RE ONLY HOME FOR A *FEW DAYS*?

MR. ABELS WANTS ME TO GO ON *TOUR*! THERE ARE *FOUR BEAUTY CONTESTS* OUT WEST HE WANTS ME TO ENTER!



A MONTH WENT BY! TWO...FOUR! GINGER FULLMAN MOVED AROUND THE COUNTRY, ADVERTIZING 'BRONZE-BURN SUN-TAN OIL!' AND PERCY FULLMAN WAS FORCED TO GO WITH HER...



IT'S *HOT*, GINGER! I CAN'T TAKE IT!

IT'S *WONDERFUL*!

HOLD IT, MRS. FULLMAN!

MARY MILTON WON BEAUTY CONTEST AFTER BEAUTY CONTEST! AND JOHN MILTON WAS FORCED TO STAY HOME AND LOOK AFTER THEIR CHILDREN...

IT'S MOMMY'S PICTURE, DADDY! LOOK! WHEN'S SHE COMING HOME, DADDY?

DISGUSTING! EXPOSING HERSELF LIKE A COMMON TRAMP!

SOON, CHILDREN! SOON!

FINALLY...

FOR *SIX MONTHS* YOU'VE DRAGGED ME AROUND FROM *BEACH TO BEACH* OUT IN THE *BURNING SUN*! WELL I'M *THROUGH*! *THROUGH*, DO YOU HEAR?

OH, *COOL OFF*, PERCY! I LOVE THE SUN!

YOU'RE COMING HOME WITH ME, GINGER! YOU'RE *FINISHED* WITH *SUN-BATHING*...

NO! I'M *STAYING*! I'M GOING ON BEING THE *BRONZE-BURN GIRL*! I LIKE IT...

ALL RIGHT, GINGER! IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU *WANT* IT...



WHILE... *NO!* I WON'T LET YOU GO AWAY AGAIN! I WON'T LET YOU MAKE A *SPECTACLE* OF YOURSELF!

OH, CAN IT, JOHNNY! PEOPLE *ADMIRE BEAUTY*! THEY ADMIRE ME!

YOU'RE STAYING HOME WITH ME, MARY! YOU'RE *THROUGH* RUNNING AROUND *HALF NAKED*... MEN *STARING* AT YOU...

NO! I'M GOING ON *TOUR* AGAIN! I LIKE BEING *STARED* AT!

ALL RIGHT, MARY! IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU *WANT* IT...



THAT NIGHT MARY MILTON WAS AWAKENED BY...

J-JOHNNY! GASP! YOU...
YOU STARTLED ME!
YOU...JOHN!
**PUT AWAY
THAT GUN!**

**GET UP!
GET INTO YOUR
BATHING
SUIT!**



FRIGHTENED, MARY HURRIEDLY DONNED HER SUIT...

JOHN! PUT DOWN THAT
GUN! I...I...WHAT ARE YOU
GOING TO DO TO ME...

SO YOU LIKE BEING
STARRED AT? SO YOU
LIKE BEING ADMIRED?
DOWN THOSE STAIRS...
INTO THE CELLAR...
MOVE!



WHILE, MANY MILES AWAY...

P-PERCY! GASP! YOU ...
YOU FRIGHTENED ME!
I...I...PERCY!
THAT KNIFE...

**GET UP!
GET INTO YOUR
BATHING
SUIT!**



GINGER FULLMAN DID AS HER HUSBAND BID...

P-PERCY! PLEASE PUT
AWAY THAT KNIFE! YOU...
YOU...WHAT ARE YOU GOING
TO DO TO ME...

SO YOU LIKE THE SUN!
SO YOU LIKE BEING
SUNBURNED! INTO THE
NEXT ROOM... **MOVE!**



MARY MILTON STOPPED AS SHE
REACHED THE END OF THE CELLAR
STEPS... **THAT VAT! WHAT
IS IT? WHAT'S
IN IT?**

YOU'LL
SEE...
DEAR!



SUDDENLY THE CELLAR WAS
FILLED WITH SCREAMS AS
JOHNNY PUSHED MARY OFF THE
LAST STEP INTO THE VAT...



MARY THRASHED ABOUT IN THE
SYRUPY CLEAR LIQUID, HER SCREAMS
GROWING WEAKER AND WEAKER...

IT'S A NEW FORMULA THEY
DISCOVERED, MARY... AT THE
PLASTICS FACTORY... WHERE
I WORK...



GINGER FULLMAN STOPPED AS SHE CAME THROUGH THE DOOR TO THE NEXT ROOM ...

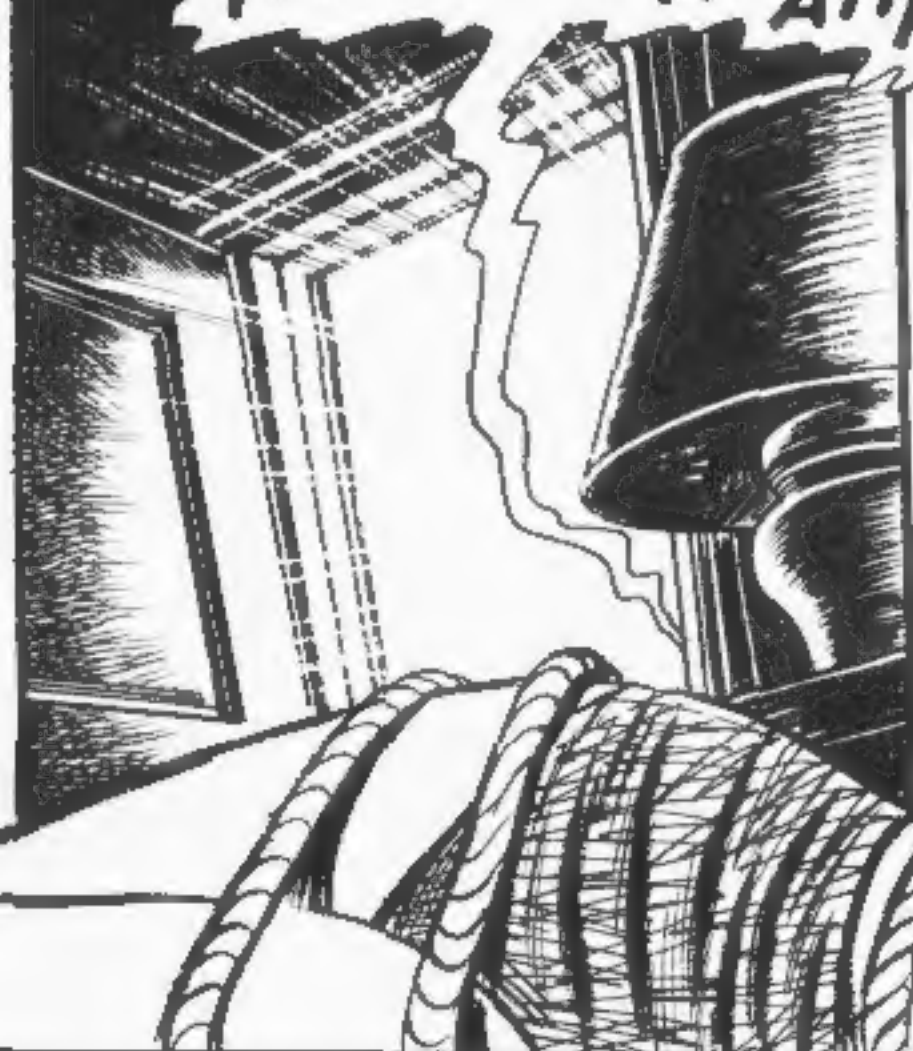
WHAT ARE *THEY*... ON THE *CEILING*? **LIGHTS?** YOU'LL *SEE*... MY DEAR!



THEN, THE ROOM WAS FILLED WITH SCREAMS AS PERCY CAUGHT GINGER AND TIED HER TO A TABLE...

PERCY! LET ME GO!

YAAAAAAAHH!



FOR THE ROOM WAS SUDDENLY FILLED WITH A BLINDING LIGHT... HOT AND WHITE...

NOT EXACTLY *LIGHTS*, GINGER! **SUN LAMPS!** FORTY OF THEM!



WHEN MR. CEDRIC ABELS CAME TO CALL THE NEXT MORNING TO TAKE HER ON ANOTHER TOUR, JOHN USHERED HIM INTO THE LIVING ROOM! THERE, ENCASED IN A BLOCK OF CLEAR PLASTIC, GROTESQUELY PRESERVED IN ITS DEATH THROES, HUNG THE TWISTED BODY OF MARY MILTON...

NOW SHE CAN BE...EH...EH... ADMIRERD... EH...EH... ALWAYS!

GOOD LORD!



AND WHEN MR. TOM SIMMENS CAME TO CALL THE NEXT MORNING TO TAKE HER OUT TO ANOTHER ADVERTISING STUNT, PERCY USHERED HIM INTO THE LIVING ROOM! THERE, UNDER THE BATTERY OF NOW-COOL SUNLAMPS, CRISPLY TOASTED TO A BRONZE-BROWN, LAY THE BLISTERED BODY OF GINGER FULLMAN...

SHE NEVER... EH... EH... COULD GET ENOUGH... EH... EH... SUN!

CHOKER!



THE END

YOU'LL BE JOLTED OUT OF YOUR SEATS BY THE
SOLID IMPACT OF THIS GRIPPING NARRATIVE!

THE BOMB!

INSPECTOR FRANK WILSON OF THE CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT STOOD IN THE FOYER OF THE BLUE SWAN CLUB SURVEYING THE NOISY, SMOKEY SCENE BEFORE HIM! THE TABLES, CROWDED TOGETHER, WERE ALL OCCUPIED! THE TWO-BY-FOUR EXCUSE FOR A DANCE FLOOR WAS JAMMED WITH GYRATING COUPLES, EACH PRESSED TOGETHER IN AN INTIMATE ATTEMPT TO FOLLOW THE SENSUOUS RHYTHMS OF THE RHUMBA ORCHESTRA! HERE AND THERE, A STRUGGLING WAITER PUSHED HIS WAY THROUGH THE MELEE, CARRYING AN ORDER TO HIS STATION! THE WHOLE SCENE WAS ONE OF UTTER CONFUSION! THE HEADWAITER SHOOK HIS HEAD...

SORRY, SIR!
WE'RE ALL
FILLED UP...

I'M NOT LOOKING FOR A
TABLE! WHERE'S
THE OFFICE...

THE HEADWAITER POINTED ACROSS THE LAUGHTER AND THE SMOKE TO A DOOR MARKED 'PRIVATE'! INSPECTOR WILSON PUSHED HIS WAY TOWARD IT! THE BRASSY ORCHESTRA EXPLODED INTO A SAMBA TEMPO AS HE FLUNG OPEN THE DOOR...

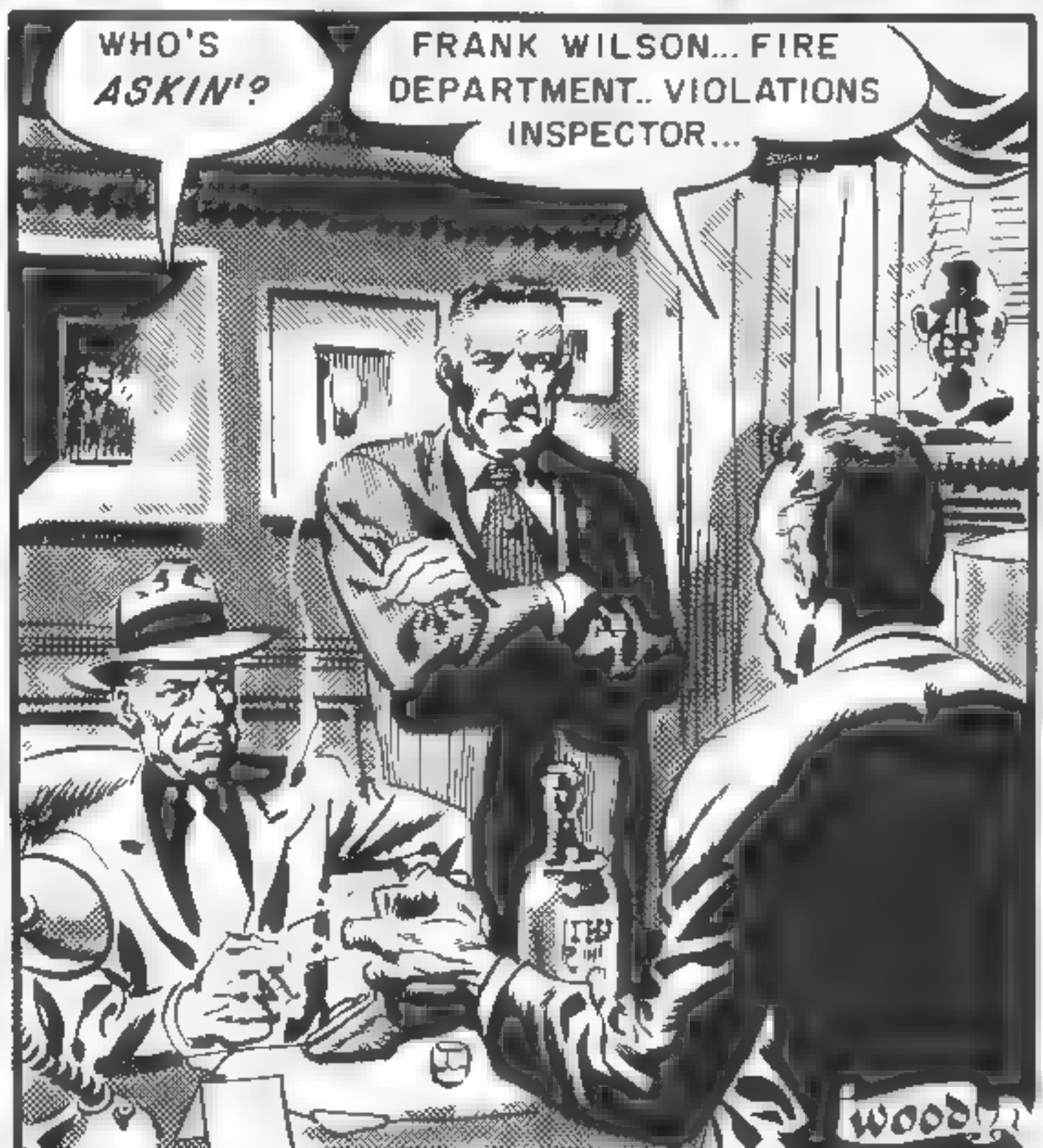
HEY! S'MATTER, BUB?
CAN'T YUH *READ*? THAT
DOOR SAYS '*PRIVATE*'!
THAT MEANS *KNOCK*...

YOU WOULDN'T HAVE
HEARD ME IF I'D'VE
EXPLODED A *BOMB*
OUT THERE! ER...WHO'S
IN *CHARGE*? WHO
OWNS THIS PLACE?



WHO'S
ASKIN'?

FRANK WILSON... FIRE
DEPARTMENT... VIOLATIONS
INSPECTOR...



**A SHOCK
SUSPENSE STORY**

THE MAN SEATED BEHIND THE EXPENSIVE LOOKING SHINY DESK SHOT A QUICK GLANCE AT THE MAN STANDING BESIDE HIM...

ER... AH... WHAT HAPPENED TO THE OTHER INSPECTOR... *FOSTER*, I THINK HIS NAME WAS?

TRANSFERRED UPTOWN! THIS IS *MY* TERRITORY NOW! YOU'VE GOT A NICE SIZE CROUD OUT THERE TONIGHT, MR... MR...



GUSKO! NICK
CUSKO! YEAH! ER...
NICE GROWD...

WHAT'S THE *LAWFUL*
CAPACITY ALLOWED FOR
YOUR PLAGE, MR. CUSKO?

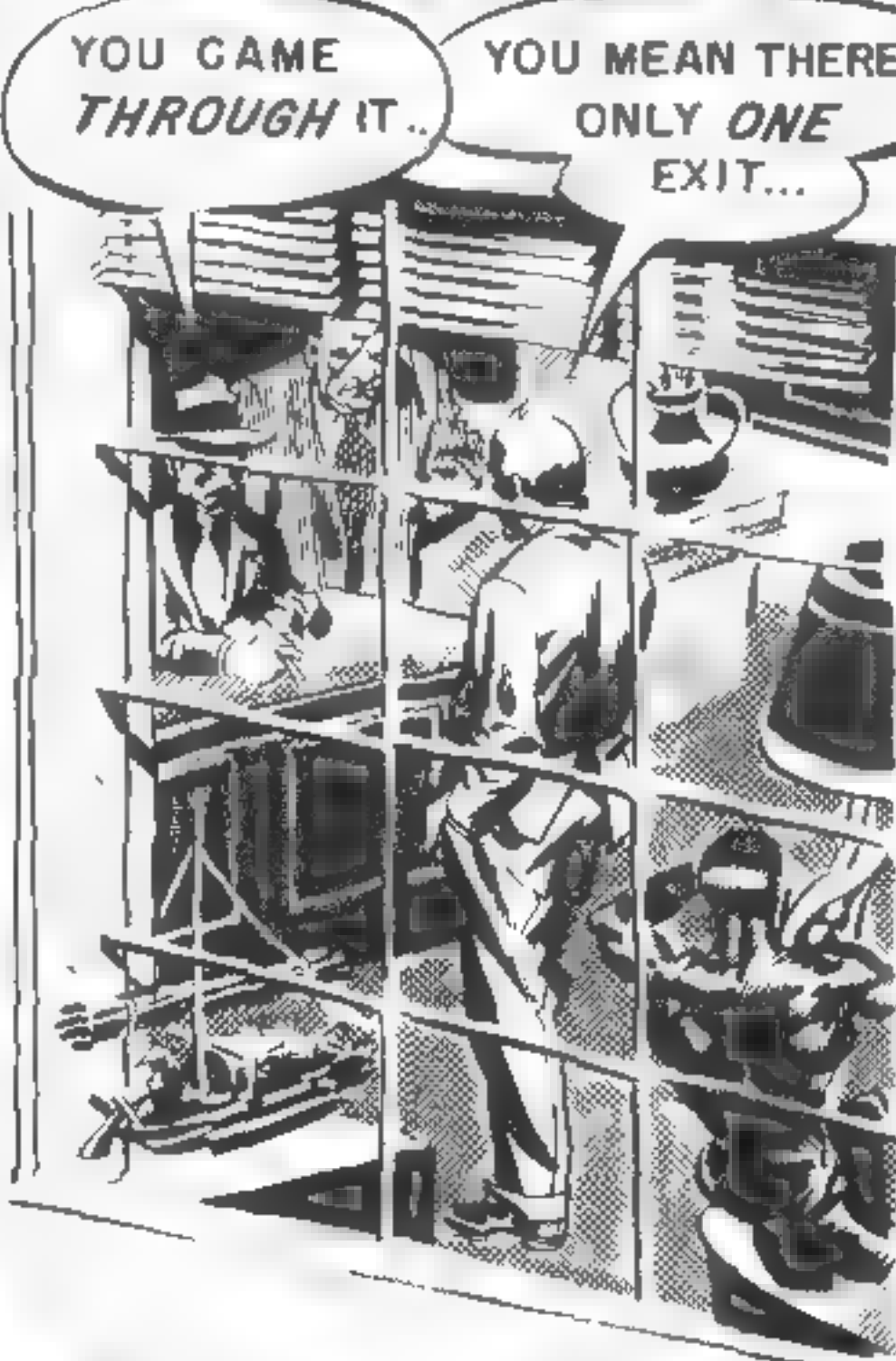
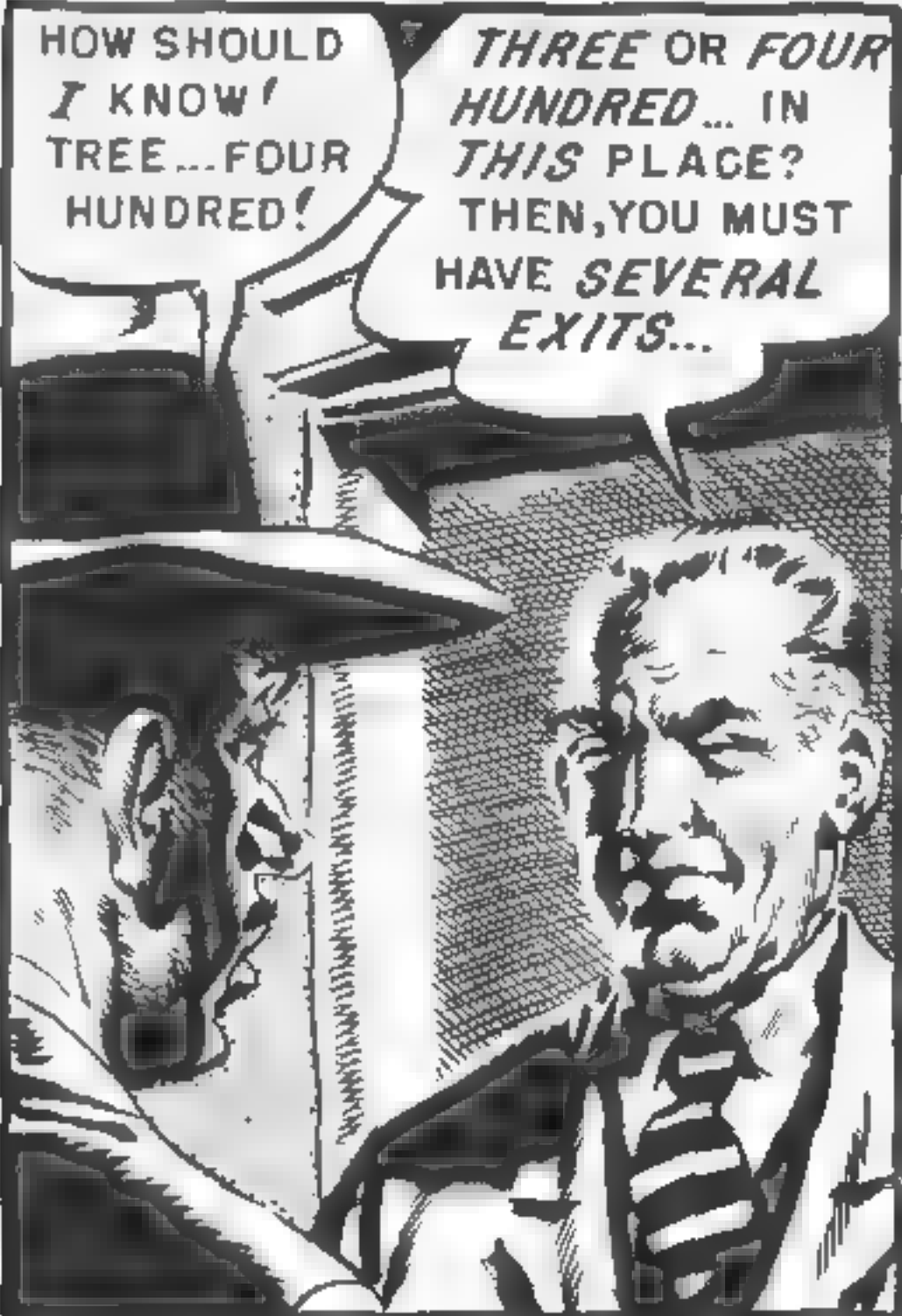


HOW SHOULD I KNOW! TREE... FOUR HUNDRED!

THREE OR FOUR HUNDRED... IN THIS PLAGE? THEN, YOU MUST HAVE *SEVERAL EXITS...*

YOU CAME THROUGH IT..

YOU MEAN THERE'S ONLY *ONE* EXIT...



LOOK, INSPECTOR! I GOT A *NICE BUSINESS* HERE! DON'T GO MAKING THINGS *DIFFICULT* FOR ME, HUH? I'M SURE YOU CAN BE... ER... *SATISFIED!*

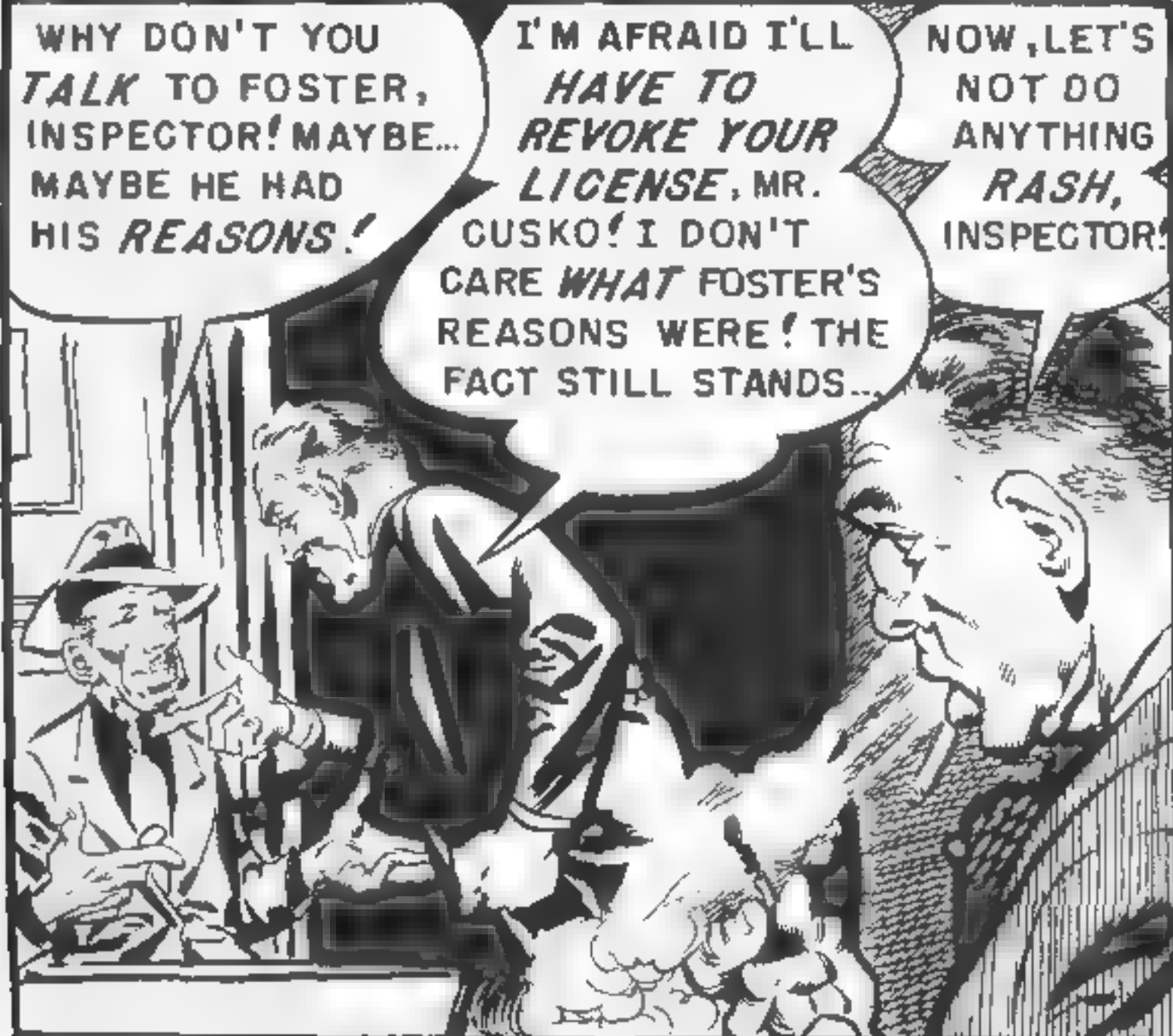
I CAN'T UNDERSTAND HOW *FOSTER* ALLOWED YOU TO STAY OPEN! IT'S A *DIRECT VIOLATION* OF THE *FIRE LAWS...*



WHY DON'T YOU TALK TO *FOSTER*, INSPECTOR! MAYBE... MAYBE HE HAD HIS *REASONS!*

I'M AFRAID I'LL HAVE TO *REVOKE YOUR LICENSE*, MR. CUSKO! I DON'T CARE *WHAT* *FOSTER*'S REASONS WERE! THE FACT STILL STANDS...

NOW, LET'S NOT DO ANYTHING *RASH*, INSPECTOR!



I'M SORRY, GENTLEMEN! THE LAW STRICTLY REQUIRES THAT THERE BE *ADEQUATE EXITS* PROVIDED IN *RELATIONSHIP* TO THE *AMOUNT* OF *PATRONS* TO BE *ACCOMODATED...*

GET WISE, *WILSON!* *FORGET* WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN HERE TONIGHT! WE'LL TAKE *GOOD CARE* OF YOU! JUST NAME YOUR *PRICE...*



INSPECTOR WILSON SLAMMED THE DOOR TO THE BLUE SWAN CLUB'S PRIVATE OFFICE AND STOOD OUTSIDE IN THE NOISE AND THE SMOKE, BREATHING HARD...

THE DIRTY @#!!x?s!
OFFERING ME A...BRIBE!



HE LOOKED AROUND, MENTALLY CALCULATING THE AMOUNT OF CUSTOMERS JAMMED INTO THE SMALL BASEMENT NIGHTCLUB...

THERE MUST BE FIVE HUNDRED PEOPLE IN HERE...AT LEAST! FIVE HUNDRED PEOPLE, AND ONLY ONE EXIT!



THEN, HE PUSHED HIS WAY THROUGH THE CROWD AND UP THE STAIRS OUT INTO THE COOL NIGHT AIR! THE TINNY MUSIC OF THE BLUE SWAN'S RHUMBA BAND DRIFTED OUT BEHIND HIM...

...AND FOSTER! IT'LL MEAN CURTAINS FOR HIM WHEN I REPORT THIS IN! THE FOOL! THE STUPID FOOL!



A GENTLE SOBBING FILLED THE APARTMENT AS INSPECTOR WILSON OPENED THE DOOR! HE SNAPPED ON THE LIGHT! JEAN, HIS TWENTY YEAR OLD DAUGHTER, LOOKED UP FROM HER PROSTRATE POSITION ON THE COUCH! TEARS SPILLED OUT OF HER RED EYES AND DOWN HER CHEEKS...

JEANNIE! HONEY!
WHAT IS IT?

OH, DADDY! SOB...
DADDY...



SHE CLUNG TO HIM, HER BODY QUIVERING! HE SOOTHED HER...COMFORTED HER! WILSON HAD BEEN BOTH MOTHER AND FATHER TO JEAN...EVER SINCE HIS WIFE HAD DIED...

IT...IT'S TED'S...FAMILY!
SOB! THEY WANT A...SOB...
BIG WEDDING!

BUT, JEANNIE! YOU...
YOU KNOW WE
CAN'T AFFORD...



I...I KNOW, DADDY!
I TRIED TO TELL
THEM! TED UNDER-
STANDS! BUT...SOB...
SOB...THEY DON'T!

NOW, STOP YOUR CRYING,
BABY! WE'LL WORK OUT
SOMETHING! I'LL BORROW
THE MONEY! WE'LL WORK
IT OUT...



THE ANGRY RINGING OF THE DOOR BELL EXPLODED THROUGH THE APARTMENT...

NO! I WON'T LET YOU
GO INTO HOCK FOR THE
REST OF YOUR LIFE FOR
SOMETHING I DON'T THINK
IS THAT IMPORTANT. I
TOLD TED THAT...OH!

I WONDER WHO
THAT CAN BE THIS
TIME OF NIGHT?
MAYBE IT'S YOUR
YOUNG MAN! BETTER
GO IN AND TOUCH UP
YOUR FACE...

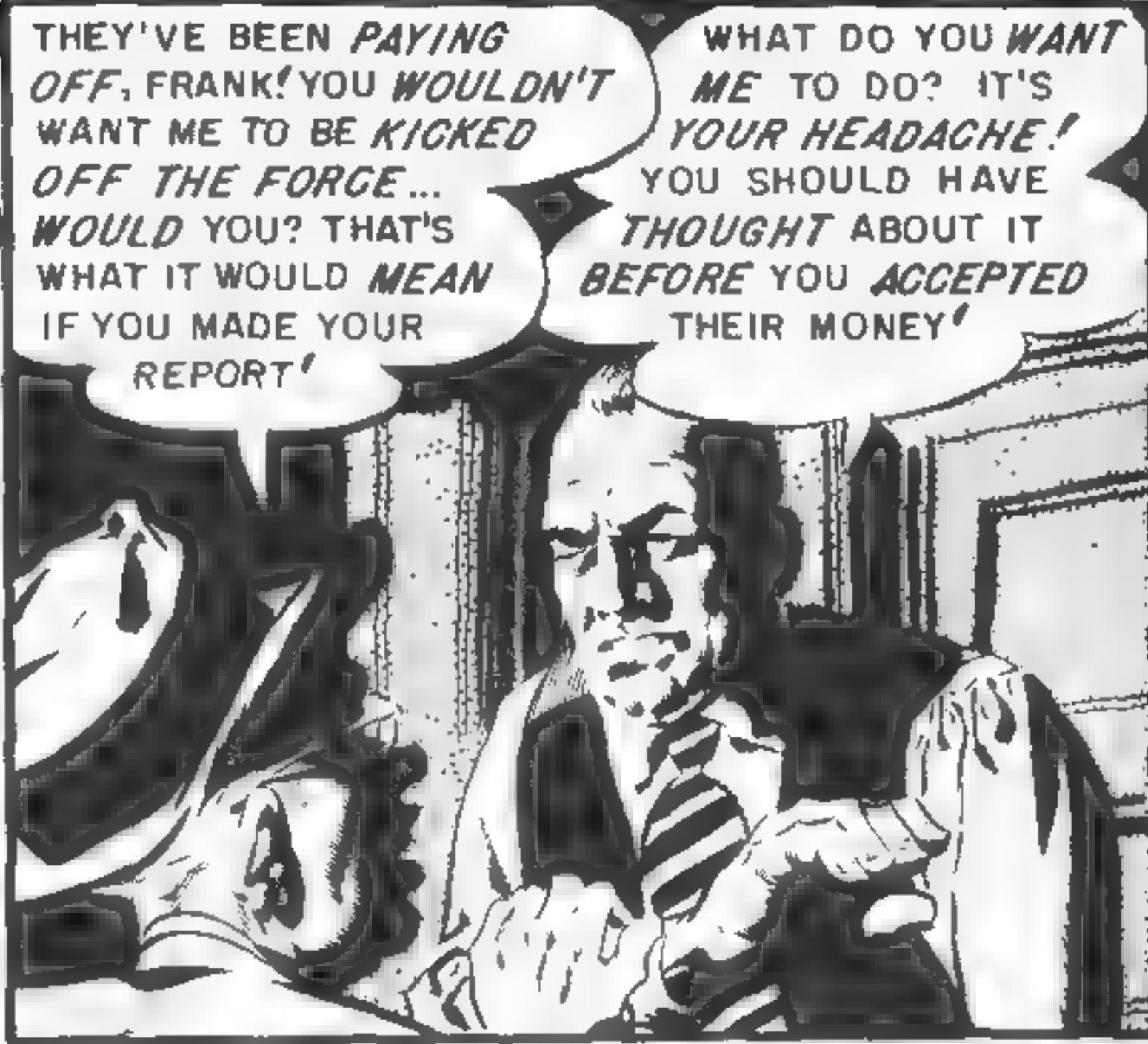


BUT THE MAN OUTSIDE THE DOOR WAS NOT JEAN'S FIANCEE! IT WAS...



HELLO, FRANK! NICK TOLD ME YOU WERE IN THE BLUE SWAN TONIGHT! I'D... LIKE TO TALK TO YOU, FRANK... BEFORE YOU DO ANYTHING!

NOTHING TO TALK ABOUT, FOSTER! I'VE GOT TO REPORT 'EM! THAT'S ALL THERE IS...



THEY'VE BEEN PAYING OFF, FRANK! YOU WOULDN'T WANT ME TO BE KICKED OFF THE FORCE... WOULD YOU? THAT'S WHAT IT WOULD MEAN IF YOU MADE YOUR REPORT!

WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO? IT'S YOUR HEADACHE! YOU SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT IT BEFORE YOU ACCEPTED THEIR MONEY!



LOOK, FRANK! THEY PAID ME A C-NOTE A MONTH! THAT'S OVER A GRAND A YEAR! FIGURE IT OUT FOR YOURSELF! ADD THAT TO WHAT THE CITY PAYS YOU...

MY DAUGHTER'S INSIDE, FOSTER! KEEP IT LOW!

IT'S EASY MONEY, FRANK! YOU JUST LOOK THE OTHER WAY... THAT'S ALL!

A GRAND! THAT'S... A LOT OF MONEY! THAT COULD MAKE AN AWFULLY NICE WEDDING...



HUH? WHAT ABOUT A WEDDING?

N-NOTHING! ER... LOOK, FOSTER! LET ME THINK ABOUT IT, EH? I'LL... LET YOU KNOW!

FRANK WILSON CLOSED THE DOOR AND STOOD THINKING A MOMENT! JEAN CAME OUT OF THE BEDROOM, SMILING...



TED? NO, JEANNIE, BABY! IT WASN'T TED! IT WAS... SOMEONE... FOR ME!

HE LOOKED DOWN AT HIS LOVELY DAUGHTER...



EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT, JEANNIE! YOU CAN TELL YOUR YOUNG MAN'S FAMILY THAT THERE WILL BE A BIG WEDDING... THE BIGGEST THEY'VE EVER SEEN!

OH, DADDY! DADDY!

THE NEXT DAY, FRANK WILSON ...
INSPECTOR... FIRE DEPARTMENT...
WENT TO SEE NICK CUSKO...



NOW YOU'RE USING
YOUR *HEAD*, WILSON!
SAME ARRANGE-
MENT AS
FOSTER?

NOT EXACTLY,
CUSKO! I
WANT MINE
ALL IN ONE
LUMP! A YEAR'S
PAYMENTS!

YOU *CRAZY*?
SUPPOSE YOU
GET *TRANS-
FERRED* AND
SOME *OTHER*
EAGER-BEAV-
ER HAS TO BE BOUGHT
OFF! I'M PAYING
DOUBLE!



THAT'S THE
CHANCE *YOU'LL*
HAVE TO
TAKE, CUSKO!
THAT'S *MY*
DEAL! TAKE
IT...OR...

NICK CUSKO GOT TO HIS FEET, WENT
TO A SMALL FLOOR SAFE, AND
REMOVED...



HERE Y'ARE,
WILSON!
1200 BUCKS!

THANKS, CUSKO!

ARRANGEMENTS FOR JEAN'S WEDDING WERE MADE!
THE DATE WAS SET! ONE NIGHT ...



WELL, YOUNG LADY! AND
DON'T *YOU* LOOK *PRETTY*!
GOING OUT ON THE *TOWN*
TONIGHT WITH *TED*?

UH-HUH! HE'LL BE
HERE IN A MOMENT!
OH-OH! THERE HE
IS *NOW*!

READY,
HONEY?

READY, TED, DARLING!
G'NIGHT, DADDY!

GOOD-NIGHT, KIDS!
HAVE A GOOD
TIME!



THEY WERE GONE! FRANK GLANCED AT THE MANTEL
CLOCK! IT WAS ALMOST NINE! HE YAWNED AND
STRETCHED...



HO, HUM! I'M *TIRED* T'NIGHT!
GUESS I'LL HIT THE HAY *EARLY*!

IT SEEMED TO FRANK THAT HE'D ONLY BEEN
ASLEEP A SHORT TIME WHEN HE WAS SUDDENLY
AWAKENED BY A SCREAMING WAIL! FAR BELOW, ON
THE STREET, A FIRE-ENGINE SHRIEKED BY, ITS
SIREN BLASTING...



HUH? OH! YAWN! *FIRE*...
SOMEWHERE! WHAT *TIME* IS
IT, ANYWAY? HMMM! *TWELVE-
THIRTY*! HO, HUM...

AND THEN THE PHONE BY THE BED BEGAN TO RING ANXIOUSLY...



H-HELLO? HELLO, FRANK? THIS IS FOSTER! BETTER GO DOWN HERE... QUICK! IT'S THE BLUE SWAN! IT'S ON FIRE! IT'S HORRIBLE! HORRIBLE! THERE MUST BE SIX HUNDRED PEOPLE TRAPPED INSIDE... CHOKE...

IT WAS LIKE A NIGHTMARE FOR WILSON, DRESSING AND SPEEDING ACROSS TOWN! WHEN HE ARRIVED...



FOSTER! WHAT HAPPENED? OH, LORD...

THEY WERE LIKE ANIMALS! ONLY FIVE OR SIX PEOPLE GOT OUT! THEY'RE OVER THERE... BURNED HORRIBLY! THE REST... THE REST... YOU... YOU SHOULD HAVE HEARD IT... THE CRYING... THE SCREAMING...

THE FIVE SURVIVORS WERE QUESTIONED! ONE OF THE SURVIVORS TOLD INSPECTOR WILSON, BETWEEN GASPS OF PAIN, WHAT HAD HAPPENED.

IT... WAS DURING THE SHOW! THEY HAD SOME JUGGLER! HE JUGGLED LIT TORCHES! THE CURTAIN CAUGHT! THEY STAMPEDED TOWARD THE EXIT... BLOCKING IT... BEHIND ME...



THEY BEGAN TO BRING OUT THE CHARRED BODIES! ONE AFTER THE OTHER...

THERE'LL BE AN INVESTIGATION, FOSTER! THEY'LL FIND OUT! OH, LORD! WHAT HAVE I DONE? I'VE MURDERED THEM... ALL OF THEM!

SHUT UP, YOU FOOL! SOMEONE WILL HEAR YOU!



ALL NIGHT LONG, THEY BROUGHT THEM OUT! THE COVERED BODIES LINED THE SIDEWALK LIKE WHITE GRAVES. A POLICE CAPTAIN APPROACHED WILSON...

WILSON! I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU!

SURE... DONALDSON!



THE POLICE CAPTAIN DREW WILSON ASIDE...

WE WERE WORKING ON IDENTIFYING THE VICTIMS, FRANK! THE GIRL WHO WANDERS AROUND PHOTOGRAPHING THE CUSTOMERS OFFERED TO HELP! SHE ALWAYS TAKES THE PICTURES BEFORE THE SHOW, AND DEVELOPS THEM IN HER SHOP DOWN THE BLOCK! AFTER THE SHOW, SHE'D DELIVER THEM! SHE HAD A BIG BATCH! PICTURES OF PEOPLE WHO... WHO DIED IN THERE! SHE HAD... THIS ONE!



CAPTAIN DONALDSON HELD UP A SHINY PHOTOGRAPH...

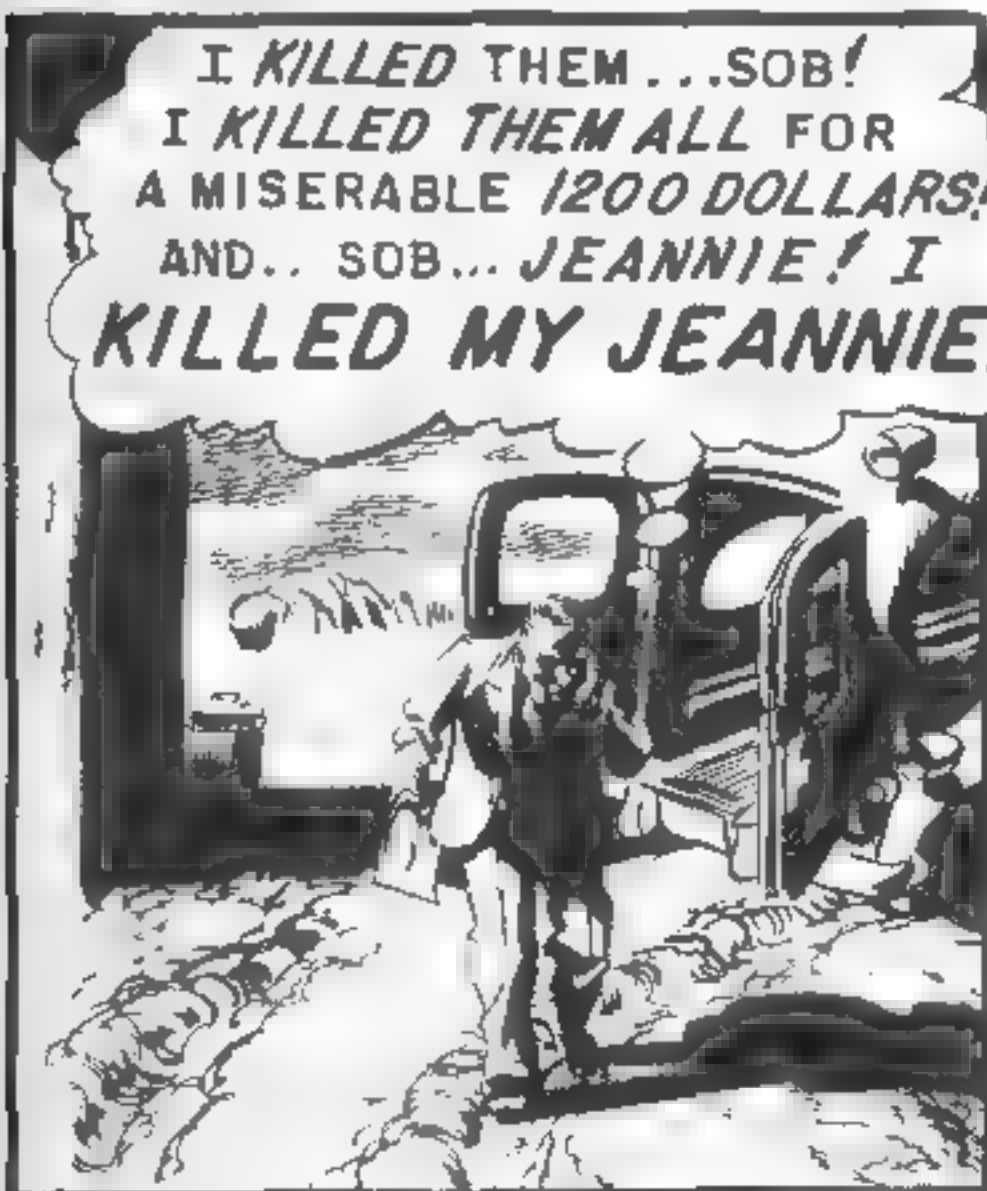
JEANNIE! OH, GOD... JEANNIE! SHE WAS THERE TONIGHT!



INSPECTOR FRANK WILSON...FIRE DEPARTMENT...STAGGERED AWAY FROM THE CHARNAL SCENE,CLUTCHING THE GLOSSY PICTURE IN HIS SHAKING FIST...

WILDLY, HE MADE HIS WAY BACK TO THE APARTMENT...

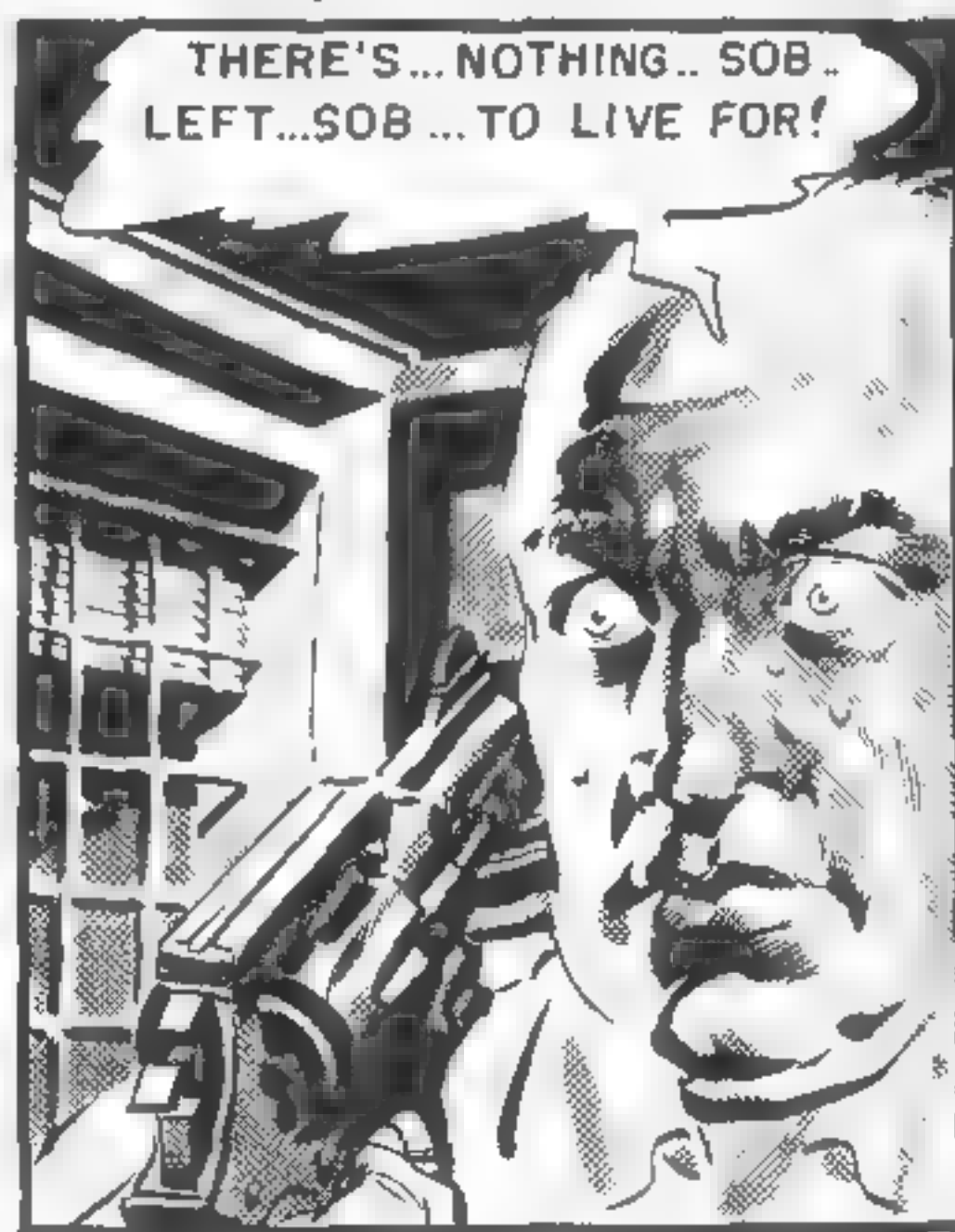
HE DREW THE GUN FROM HIS NIGHT TABLE DRAWER! HE LIFTED IT .. STARING INTO THE BLACK MUZZLE...



I KILLED THEM...SOB!
I KILLED THEM ALL FOR
A MISERABLE 1200 DOLLARS!
AND... SOB... JEANNIE! I
KILLED MY JEANNIE!



JEANNIE...SOB!
JEANNIE!



THERE'S...NOTHING.. SOB..
LEFT...SOB...TO LIVE FOR!

THE GUNSHOT ECHOED THROUGH THE DARK APARTMENT! THE BODY PITCHED FORWARD, SPRAWLING AWKWARDLY ON THE BEDROOM FLOOR...

THE TELEPHONE BEGAN TO RING! ITS INSISTANT JANGLE VIBRATED UPON DEAD EARS...



FAR AWAY A WOMAN AT A SWITCH-BOARD TURNED TO THE YOUNG COUPLE...

JEANNIE LOOKED AT TED...HER EYES SPARKLING WITH HAPPINESS..



SORRY! LONG DISTANCE
SAYS THE NUMBER
DOESN'T ANSWER!

WELL, TRY IT AGAIN,
PLEASE, OPERATOR!
HE MUST BE SLEEPING!

DADDY WILL BE SO HAPPY
WHEN HE FINDS OUT WE'VE
ELOPED, TED, DEAR! YOU...
YOU'VE BEEN WONDERFUL
ABOUT THIS. JUST
WONDERFUL!

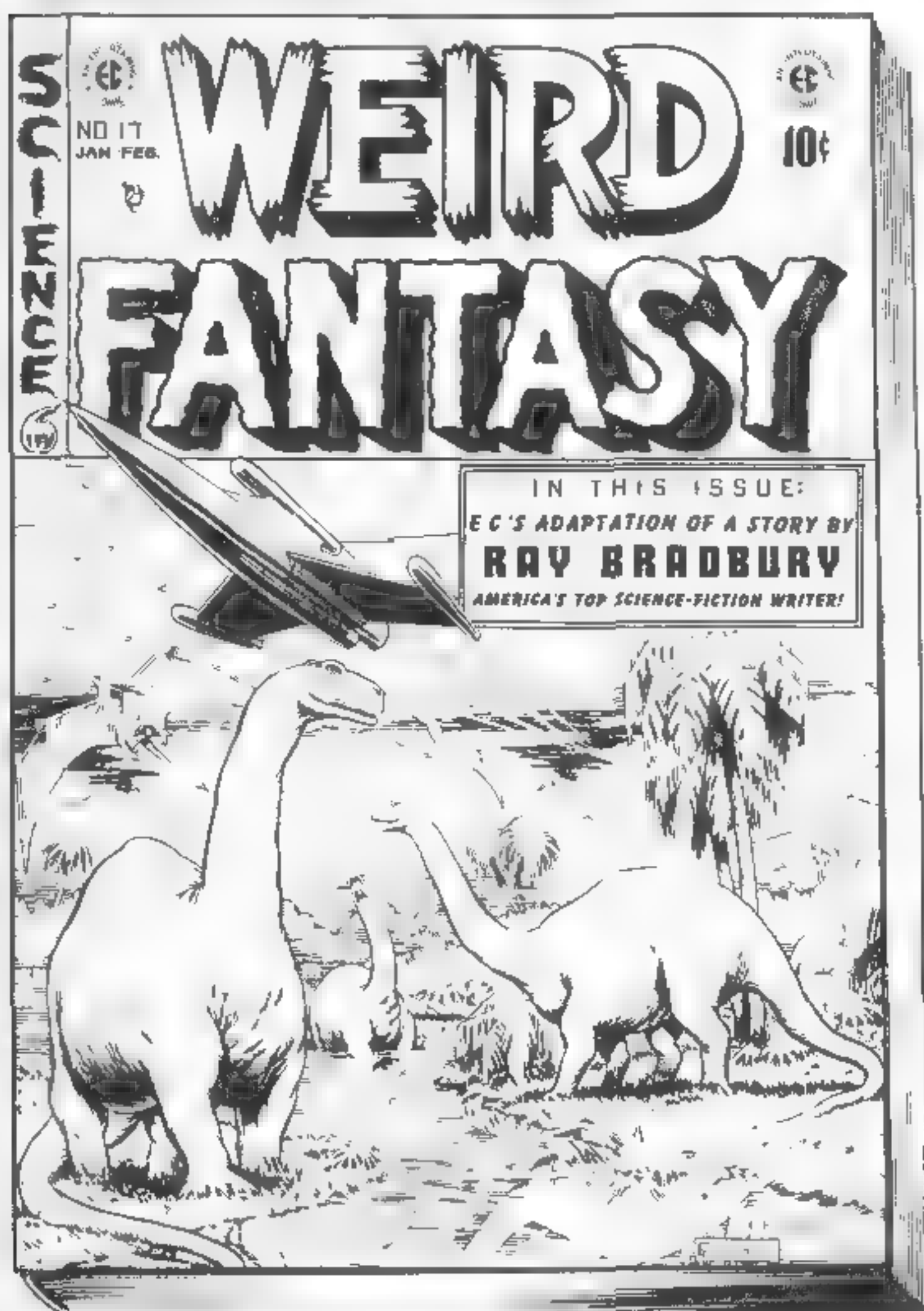
LISTEN, HONEY!
WHEN YOU TOLD
ME IN THE BLUE
SWAN THAT HE'D
BORROWED THE
MONEY TO PAY FOR THE
WEDDING, I KNEW IT WAS
THE ONLY WAY! HEY!
Y'KNOW...WE RAN OUT
WITHOUT STAYING FOR
THE SHOW...



THE
END

E.C. FANS!

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OF OUR SCIENCE - FICTION
MAGAZINES! LOOK FOR...**



**ANOTHER
"NEW TREND"
ENTERTAINING COMICS
ON SALE NOW
AT ALL NEWSSTANDS!**

THE MOUNTAIN JACKAL

Tajik Kabal, the lawless Afghan chieftain, had sacked Border villages, burned colonial stations, and filled the mountain passes with bodyless heads . . . and headless bodies . . . for four unfettered years!

Kabal's roaming fanatics didn't stay long in one district, if that was any consolation to the Anglo-Indian outposts that guarded the Hurrum Hills. For a time, it seemed that Kabal's murderous raids and rampages had ceased. The British certainly hoped that Kabal had become arm-weary from swinging his deadly, double edged, three-foot sword! Some expressed the hope that he had packed his band of cut-throats off to Russia, or even China . . . judging by their hardy endurance and the range they covered. But it soon became known that Tajik Kabal was settling down right in the Hurrum Hills! He was building a great citadel there, a great store-house for the loot he had already amassed and a great garrison from which to strike forth and amass more ill-gotten gains!

Tajik Kabal's biggest mistake was in choosing the site for his fortress. It was in the same district as Her Majesty's Fort Saint Patrick. The fort was so-called because its complement was comprised mainly of the Queen's Royal Irish Hussars.

Seventy soldiers of F Company left the fort one early morning to attend a surprise "house-warming" at Tajik Kabal's! Their favorite *bhisti*, young Jenga Shah, slapped the water-filled goatskin bag slung at his side in rhythm with the hooves of the plodding ammunition-mules.

The siege was a short one! Seventy Martini rifles formed a perimeter around Kabal's unfinished fortress and advanced upon it in an ever-tightening circle. A few of the besieged Snider rifles expressed a difference of opinion but were promptly quieted by the out-spoken Martinis. And when the smoke cleared, there were still seventy British soldiers . . . and twenty less Pathan fanatics!

Six of the wisest Irish troopers provided a personal escort for Tajik Kabal. His fine fig-

ure towered a head above the Celtic guards that flanked him. But the aquiline profile of Tajik Kabal betrayed neither hope nor despair. He sorely missed his ornate Damascus blade, wrought of the finest tempered steel, for it had been like a third arm to him. The soldiers had given it to their faithful water-carrier, Jenga Shah, to carry back to the fort

And as the triumphant war party weaved through the twisting passes that bottled up the torturous afternoon sun, all the joys of victory left Jenga Shah's heart! Jenga Shah, the orphan, recognized the flashing sword that he carried! Three years ago, this same sword had cleaved his loved ones from him

and Tajik Kabal, the Mountain Jackal, had done the wielding! One thousand nights ago, Kabal's raiders had set upon his village, hacked away his household, and made him an orphan fleeing in the protective mantle of night!

* * * *

It was night at Fort Saint Patrick! Tajik Kabal was already succumbing to the lonely confines of his dungeon. Then the water-carrier came to him, quietly . . . and with a key!

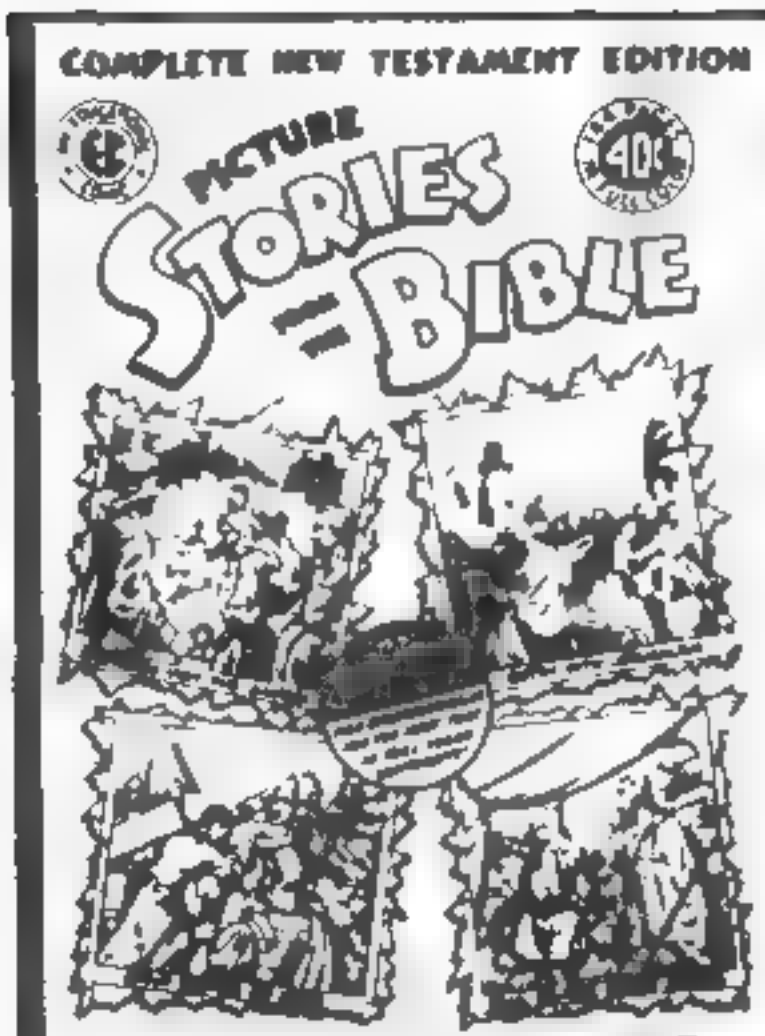
He told Kabal that he would whistle like a bird as a signal that he had lured the trusting prison guard to the far side of the courtyard on some pretense. Then Kabal must open the cell door, let himself out of the prison, run for the nearest wall where a ladder would be propped in the shadows, and scale it to freedom! Kabal was bewildered . . . but grateful!

* * * *

Within the hour, a shrill whistle came from the other side of the courtyard! Tajik Kabal let himself out of his cell, slipped off his sandals, ran out of the unguarded prison, and padded noiselessly through the dark. The wall loomed before him! He could make out the ladder's shape, now!

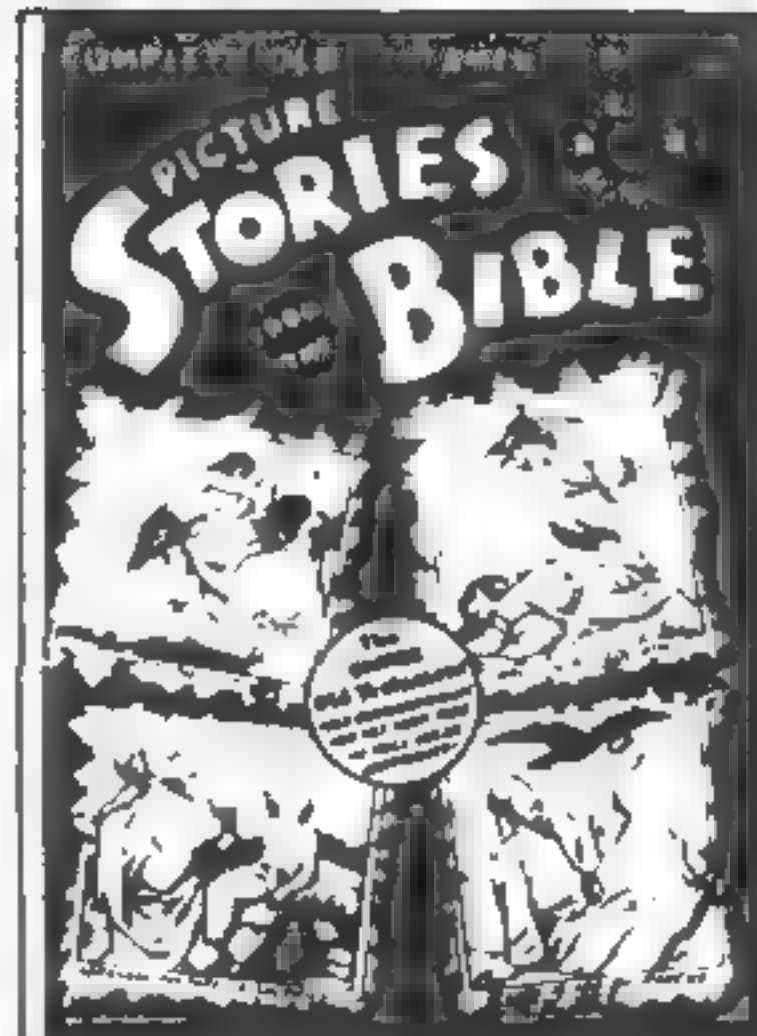
With one great bound, he aimed his bare feet for the third rung, reaching his fingers forward to grasp a top-most rung simultaneously! All his weight was upon the rungs when he felt his fingers sliced away . . . and his feet impaled to the bones on the bottom "rung"!

Too late, Tajik Kabal learned that . . . "He who lives by the sword, dies by the sword!" The "rungs" of the ladder were imbedded razor-sharp bayonets!



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SHOCK TALK

If we may wax serious, this issue, we'd like to bring to your attention a condition existing in the comic industry of which you are probably not aware! As you know, we have always considered you, our readers, **more than** mere customers — rather we have considered each and every one of you an integral part of the E.C. family. Accordingly, we have attempted to play things straight with you, and have brought our problems to you as they arose. The problem that we now face is a very serious one! Every few years, the comic industry 'collapses'. The last big collapse was early in 1950. Several publishers went out of business, most others dropped titles, changed titles, or temporarily suspended operations. At that time, we at E.C. completely revised our line, and started from scratch with our new trend comics. For the last three years, you readers have been good to us! We have prospered, grown, and now publish 10 bi-monthlies. We were highly successful in horror, science-fiction, and then in war comics. Our success led to other publishers loading the stands with *their* horror, s.f., and war comics, loading the stands to extent that in September 1952, *there were over 500 different comic mags being published!* An incredible total — *an impossible total!* Although more comic magazines are being sold today than ever before, the total sales cannot support 500 titles. So the inevitable happened! Last March, the comic industry began to collapse again under the weight of this impossible number of titles. At this writing (early October), the field is filled with rumors of publisher after publisher either going out of business or dropping titles! Money is being lost in great gobs by virtually everyone in comics! Why are we troubling you, our readers, with all this? Two reasons: first, to thank you! E.C. is a small outfit, as comic outfits go. Our capital reserve is relatively small. IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR THE FAITHFUL ISSUE

AFTER ISSUE BUYING HABIT OF YOU READERS, E.C. WOULD HAVE GONE DOWN THE DRAIN! For this — your loyalty and continued readership — we earnestly and sincerely thank you. As V.K. would put it, 'We're all choked up!' Secondly, we are telling you all this because we want to ask **a favor**. There are **STILL** over 500 titles on the stands, and will be for some months! (It takes time to drop a title!) Thus far, although we're losing money on some of our titles, E.C. is standing firm, and we are continuing to publish all 10 magazines! The favor? Simply this: **KEEP BUYING E.C. MAGAZINES!** Please don't misunderstand. We don't want a *single* reader to spend a *single* dime that he needs for anything important on an E.C. mag. But if you're **PLANNING** to spend that dime on a comic mag, make it an E.C.! More than ever before, we need your business! **WE NEED YOUR BUSINESS TO STAY IN BUSINESS!**

Before closing, just a word about RAY BRADBURY, America's top horror and s.f. writer — who, as most of you probably know by now, has given E.C. permission to adapt some of his best stories. Mr. B.'s fascinating horror tale, THE SMALL ASSASSIN, appears in this issue. Subscriptions to any E.C. mag will get you back 75¢ — six issues — full color supply — 3 manila envelopes. Please keep coming — your letters simultaneously inspire us and keep us — our toes to give you the best. Address for name and/or subscriptions to:

The Editors
Shock SuspensStories
Room 106, Dept.
225 Lafayette St.
N.Y.C. 12, N.Y.

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 3, 1912 AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933 AND JULY 3, 1946 (Title 49, United States Code, Section 236) of SHOCK SUSPENSSTORIES published bi-monthly at New York, N.Y. for October, 1952.

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, Tiny Tot Comics Inc., 225 Lafayette St., New York 12, N.Y.; Editor, Albert B. Feidstein, 225 Lafayette St., New York 12, N.Y.; Managing Editor, William M. Gaines, 225 Lafayette St., New York 12, N.Y.; Business manager, Frank D. Lee, 225 Lafayette St., New York 12, N.Y.

2. That the owner is: (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding one percent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a firm, company, or other unincorporated concern, its name and address, as well as those of each individual member, must be given.) Tiny Tot Comics Inc., 225 Lafayette St., New York 12, N.Y.; Wm. M. Gaines, 225 Lafayette St., New York 12, N.Y.; J. K. Gaines, 225 Lafayette St., New York 12, N.Y.; V. E. MacAhee, 225 Lafayette St., New York 12, N.Y.

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5. The average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the 12 months preceding the date shown above was: (This information is required from dailies, weeklies, semi-weeklies, and tri-weekly newspapers only.)

(Signed) FRANK D. LEE, Business Manager

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 30th day of September, 1952
Ettore De Stefano, Notary Public (My commission expires March 30, 1954.)

[SEAL]

BRACE YOURSELVES FOR THE STARTLING WIND-UP
TO THIS SCIENCE-FICTION YARN!

INFILTRATION



A SCIENCE-FICTION SUSPENSE STORY

WHEN I ARRIVED IN WASHINGTON, D.C., I REPORTED DIRECTLY TO COLONEL WAYNE SHAW IN THE PENTAGON BUILDING! HE READ MY LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION CAREFULLY... THEN LOOKED ME OVER...

HMMM! YES! WELL, I THINK YOU'LL DO *NICELY*, MISS CURTISS! I'VE BEEN *NEEDING* A *PRIVATE SECRETARY* FOR SOME *TIME* NOW, AND YOU'RE *JUST* THE ONE TO *FILL* THE *JOB*!

THANK YOU, COLONEL! CAN YOU *BRIEF* ME ON JUST WHAT WORK THE GROUP HAS *ACCOMPLISHED* SINCE...

COLONEL SHAW GLANCED AROUND UNCOMFORTABLY AS I QUESTIONED HIM! HE BECKONED TO ME AND I DREW CLOSER...

WE'VE GOT TO BE *VERY CAREFUL*, MISS CURTISS! ALL OF THE WORK WE'VE *DONE*... ALL OF OUR *PROGRESS* TO DATE... IS IN *GREAT DANGER*! I *SUSPECT* THAT OUR GROUP HAS BEEN *INFILTRATED*!

YOU . YOU MEAN THAT THERE IS AN *ALIEN* AMONG US?





EXACTLY! SO YOU MUST BE ON GUARD AT ALL TIMES!

I UNDERSTAND, COLONEL!

THIS MAY COME AS A COMPLETE SURPRISE TO YOU, BUT DO YOU KNOW THAT THERE IS A GOVERNMENT BUREAU, WORKING IN COOPERATION WITH THE ARMY, NAVY, AND F.B.I., SPECIFICALLY FORMED FOR THE PURPOSE OF INVESTIGATING AND FERRETING OUT *MARTIAN INVADERS*? COLONEL SHAW HEADS THAT BUREAU...

AND NOW, MISS CURTISS, IF YOU'LL COME WITH ME, I'LL INTRODUCE YOU AROUND!

THANK YOU, SIR!



IT IS A *SMALL* GOVERNMENT AGENCY...*TOP SECRET!* WITH THE APPEARANCE OF THE FLYING SAUCERS, THE THOUGHT THAT POSSIBLY AN UNDERCOVER INVASION WAS TAKING PLACE PROMPTED FORMATION OF THE BUREAU...



GENTLEMEN... THIS IS THE BUREAU'S

NEW SECRETARY! MISS CURTISS!

HY, MISS CURTISS!

GLAD TO MEET YOU, MA'AM!



MR. BRADY! I WONDER IF YOU WOULD BE KIND ENOUGH TO GIVE MISS CURTISS A *BRIEF RESUME* OF THE BUREAU'S HISTORY...

GLAD TO, COLONEL! MISS CURTISS? LEAD THE WAY, MR. BRADY!

AS MR. BRADY LED ME INTO THE FILE ROOM, I REMEMBERED COLONEL SHAW'S WARNING ABOUT BEING ON GUARD AT ALL TIMES! I RESOLVED TO MEASURE EVERY WORD I SPOKE...



AS YOU KNOW, MISS CURTISS, THE ARMY BELIEVES THAT FLYING SAUCERS MAY BE BRINGING MARTIANS TO EARTH AND LANDING THEM HERE!

...AND THAT THEY MAY BE INFILTRATING GOVERNMENT, POLITICS, AND BUSINESS! YES... I KNOW THAT...



...THAT THEY ARE COMPLETELY ALIEN IN FORM BUT, DUE TO A PROTECTIVE HYPNOTIC SCREEN WHICH THEY SURROUND THEMSELVES WITH, APPEAR AS HUMAN BEINGS!

MR. BRADY! I'VE BEEN THROUGH BASIC TRAINING! WHAT ABOUT THE AGENCY'S PROGRESS?



THESE ARE THE FILES OF ALL REPORTS DIRECTED TO THIS BUREAU CONCERNING POSSIBLE MARTIAN INVADERS! EACH REPORT IS CAREFULLY CHECKED!

AND SO FAR, NO PROOF HAS BEEN FOUND THAT MARTIANS EXIST?



CORRECT! EACH REPORT HAS BEEN *FOLLOWED...* ANALYZED...THE *SUSPECTED INDIVIDUAL* CHECKED... AND *CLEARED!*

SO WE ARE COMPARATIVELY *SAFE...*



SAFE, MISS CURTISS? NO! I DON'T *THINK* SO!

BUT YOU SAID ALL SUSPECTS HAVE BEEN *CLEARED!* DOESN'T THAT *MEAN* WE'RE *SAFE?*



THEY'RE *CLEVER*, MISS CURTISS! *VERY CLEVER!* WHY, I SUSPECT *ALIENS* HAVE *INFILTRATED* THIS *VERY ORGANIZATION!*



I'D BEEN ON GUARD! NOW, I BREATHED A SIGH OF RELIEF...

YES! I *KNOW!*

YOU *KNOW?* BUT HOW *COULD* YOU?



COLONEL SHAW *WARNED* ME THAT AN *ALIEN* WAS AMONG US! I'M *SO GLAD* IT'S NOT YOU, MR. BRADY! I...

PHIL! CALL ME *PHIL!* I...I'D LIKE TO TAKE YOU *OUT* TONIGHT, MISS CURTISS ...IF YOU'RE NOT *BUSY...*



NOT MISS CURTISS, PHIL! *BETTY!* WHY...I'M NOT *BUSY* AT *ALL* TONIGHT! MAYBE WE CAN GO SOMEWHERE *QUIET...* AND...*YOU KNOW...* LET DOWN OUR HAIR A LITTLE!

SAY...I'D LIKE *THAT!* FRANKLY, I'VE BEEN ON *EDGE* LATELY! I DON'T KNOW *WHY!*



I UNDERSTAND! IT'S THIS *CONSTANT PRESSURE!* IT'LL DO YOU *GOOD* TO *RELAX* A LITTLE! NOW, HOW ABOUT GOING ON WITH THE BRIEFING!

SURE, BETTY! BUT THERE'S NOT MUCH MORE *TO* IT! THAT'S ABOUT THE *WHOLE WORKS!*

THE BRIEFING OVER, I LEFT MR. BRADY AND RETURNED ONCE MORE TO COLONEL SHAW'S OFFICE...



WELL, MISS CURTISS? WHAT DO YOU THINK OF OUR MR. BRADY?

HE'S NICE, COLONEL! OF COURSE I DON'T KNOW HIM THE WAY I'D LIKE TO.

I DON'T THINK YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW HIM AT ALL, MISS CURTISS!



HE SEEMS NICE! HE ASKED ME OUT TONIGHT!

DID YOU NOTICE ANYTHING STRANGE ABOUT BRADY, MISS CURTISS?



STRANGE? NO! OH... HE DID MENTION THAT HE KNEW OF THE ALIEN IN OUR MIDST!



HAH! THAT'S A LAUGH! HE SHOULD KNOW! HE'S THE ONE! HE'S THE ALIEN!

BRADY?! OH, NO! I I HOPE I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING! BUT... THEN THEY KNOW ABOUT OUR ORGANIZATION!



BRADY IS WORKING ALONE, MISS CURTISS! THEY DON'T KNOW ABOUT OUR ORGANIZATION, YET! YOU SAY THAT HE SUSPECTS THERE IS AN ALIEN IN OUR MIDST?

YES! THAT'S WHAT HE SAID! I... I... THAT'S RIGHT! HE DID SAY THAT!



WE'VE GOT TO WORK FAST, MISS CURTISS! HE KNOWS SOMETHING! WE'VE GOT TO BRING THIS THING TO A SHOWDOWN... TONIGHT!

I'M GOING OUT WITH HIM TONIGHT!



GOOD! NOW THIS IS WHAT WE'LL DO! YOU ACT AS THOUGH YOU TRUST HIM... GO OUT WITH HIM! THEN... TOWARDS MIDNIGHT.

THAT NIGHT...ALTHOUGH I WAS EXTREMELY NERVOUS...I WENT OUT WITH OUR 'ALIEN MR. BRADY'.

IT'S ALMOST MIDNIGHT, PHIL! HOW ABOUT GOING BACK TO MY PLACE?

SOUNDS SWELL TO ME, BETTY! I'LL HAIL A CAB.



THE CAB TOOK US ACROSS WASHINGTON TO MY APARTMENT HOUSE! AS I UNLOCKED MY APARTMENT DOOR...

SAY! NICE PLACE YOU'VE GOT HERE, BETTY!

I LIKE IT...FOR AN EARTH APARTMENT!



EARTH APARTMENT? WHAT'S THE GAG, HON?

YOU KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT, MR. BRADY! YOU'RE NOT ONE OF US! YOU'RE ONE OF THEM... ONE OF THE ALIENS...



HE STARED AT ME FOR A MOMENT...

WHAT A FOOL I'VE BEEN!

YES, MR. BRADY! A FOOL! OH, I WOULDN'T TRY ANYTHING! THIS IS A VERY POTENT EARTH AUTOMATIC!



I SHOULD HAVE REALIZED, WHEN YOU TOLD ME THAT COLONEL SHAW SUSPECTED AN ALIEN AMONG YOU... I SHOULD HAVE REALIZED THAT HE MEANT ME!

YES, MR. BRADY! YOU WEREN'T VERY CLEVER! WE REASONED EXACTLY THE SAME WAY!



COLONEL SHAW CAME OUT OF THE BEDROOM...

ONLY WE REASONED FIRST, MR. BRADY! TOO BAD!

HE'S ALL YOURS, SIR!

WHAT...WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO TO ME?





HERE IS A TALE OF TENSION WITH SHEER HORROR
IN ITS BLOOD-CURDLING CLIMAX!

THE SMALL ASSASSIN!

JUST WHEN THE IDEA OCCURED TO HER THAT SHE WAS BEING MURDERED SHE COULD NOT TELL. THERE HAD BEEN LITTLE SUBTLE SIGNS, LITTLE SUSPICIONS FOR THE PAST MONTH; THINGS AS DEEP AS SEA TIDES IN HER. BUT NOW THE ROOM FLOATED AROUND HER IN AN EFFLUVIUM OF HYSTERIA. SHARP INSTRUMENTS HOVERED AND THERE WERE VOICES AND PEOPLE IN STERILE WHITE MASKS. SHE WAS ALONE WITH THOSE SILENT WHITE PEOPLE AND THERE WAS GREAT PAIN AND NAUSEA AND DEATH- FEAR IN HER. AND SHE THOUGHT TO HERSELF...

I AM BEING *MURDERED* BEFORE THEIR EYES! THESE DOCTORS, THESE NURSES DON'T *REALIZE* WHAT HIDDEN THING HAS *HAPPENED* TO ME! DAVID DOESN'T KNOW! *NO ONE* KNOWS EXCEPT *ME*... AND...THE *KILLER*, THE *LITTLE MURDERER*, THE *SMALL ASSASSIN*!



A **HORROR SUSPENSTORY**
ADAPTED FROM A TALE BY
RAY BRADBURY

FOOTSTEPS. GENTLE, APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS. THE SOUND OF PEOPLE TRYING TO BE QUIET. AN ODOR OF TWEEDS, A PIPE, A CERTAIN SHAVING LOTION. SHE KNEW DAVID WAS STANDING OVER HER. AND BEYOND, THE IMMACULATE ODOR OF DR. JEFFERS. AND SHE THOUGHT TO HERSELF...

WOULD YOU LIKE TO *MEET* THE MURDERER, DAVID? *WOULD YOU?*

ALICE? ARE YOU AWAKE?

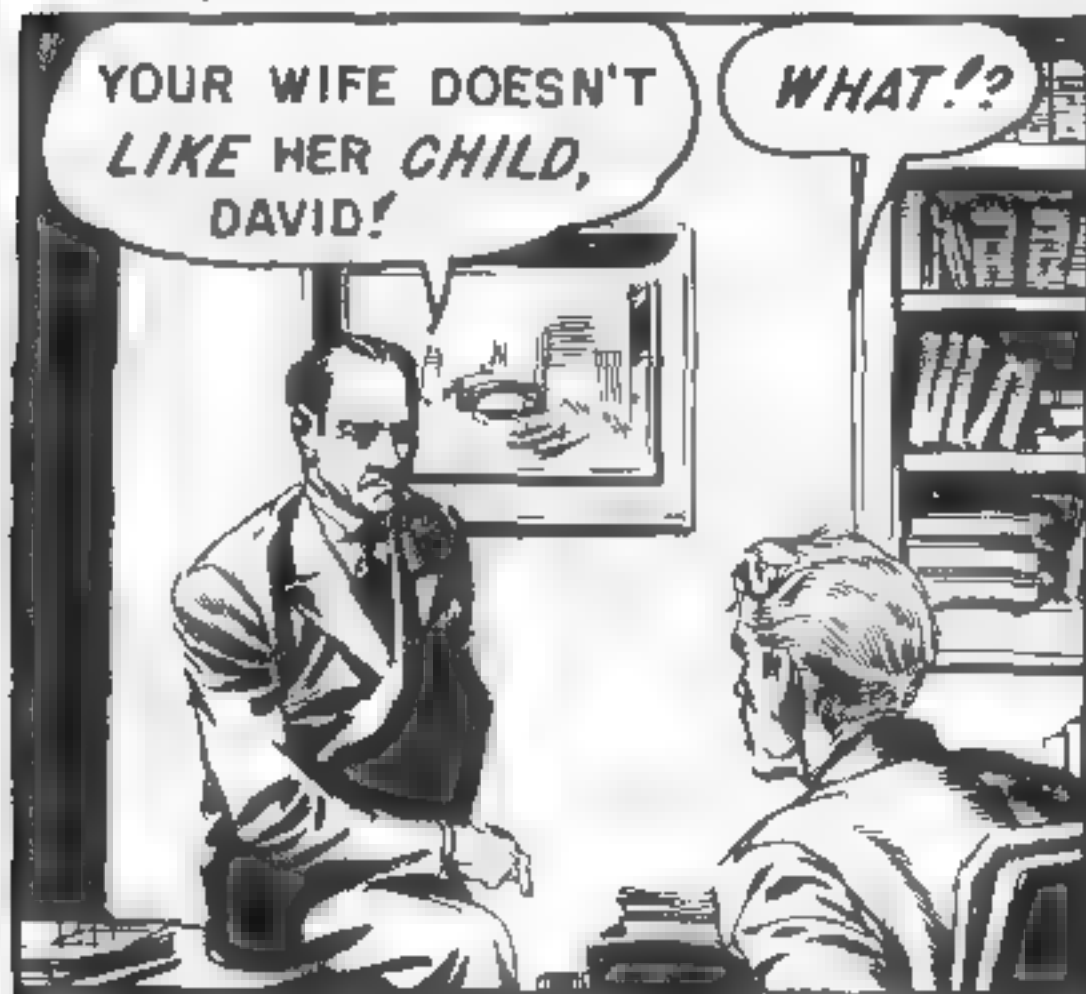


ALICE OPENED HER EYES. THE ROOM CAME INTO FOCUS. MOVING A WEAK HAND, SHE PULLED ASIDE THE COVERLET. THE 'MURDERER' LOOKED UP AT DAVID WITH A SMALL RED-FACED, BLUE-EYED CALM.

WHY... WHY HE'S A *FINE* BABY, ALICE!



DR. JEFFERS WAS WAITING FOR DAVID THE DAY HE SHOWED UP AT THE HOSPITAL TO TAKE HIS WIFE AND NEW CHILD HOME. HE MOTIONED DAVID INTO A CHAIR IN HIS OFFICE, SAT ON THE EDGE OF HIS DESK, AND LOOKED DAVID STRAIGHT IN THE EYE...



YOUR WIFE DOESN'T LIKE HER CHILD, DAVID!

WHAT!?

DR. JEFFERS CONTINUED...

IT'S BEEN A HARD THING FOR HER. THE WHOLE THING. SHE'LL NEED A LOT OF LOVE IN THIS NEXT YEAR. I DIDN'T MENTION IT AT THE TIME, BUT SHE WAS HYSTERICAL IN THE DELIVERY ROOM. I WON'T REPEAT WHAT SHE SAID. ALL I'LL SAY IS THAT SHE FEELS ALIEN TOWARD THE CHILD. IS...IS THIS CHILD A WANTED CHILD, DAVID?



YES! YES, IT'S A 'WANTED' CHILD. IT WAS PLANNED. WE PLANNED IT TOGETHER! ALICE WAS SO HAPPY A YEAR AGO WHEN...

IT MUST BE SOMETHING ELSE, THEN! PERHAPS SOMETHING BURIED IN HER CHILDHOOD. IN ANY CASE, IF SHE SAYS ANYTHING ABOUT... WELL...ABOUT WISHING THE CHILD HAD BEEN BORN DEAD, SMOOTH IT OVER, WILL YOU, SON?



SUPPERTIME...SOMETIME LATER. DAVID HAD BROUGHT THE CHILD FROM THE NURSERY, PROPPED HIM AT A TINY, BEWILDERED ANGLE, SUPPORTED BY MANY PILLOWS, IN A NEWLY PURCHASED HIGH CHAIR...



HE'S NOT HIGH-CHAIR SIZE YET, DAVID!

FUN HAVING HIM HERE, ANYWAY. EVERYTHING'S FUN. AT THE OFFICE, TOO. HEY, LOOK AT JUNIOR, WILL YOU? DROOLING ALL DOWN HIS CHIN.

DAVID REACHED OVER TO DAB AT THE BABY'S CHIN WITH HIS NAPKIN. FROM THE CORNER OF HIS EYE, HE REALIZED THAT ALICE WASN'T EVEN WATCHING. HE FINISHED THE JOB AND WENT BACK TO HIS FOOD...



I GUESS IT WASN'T VERY INTERESTING! BUT, ONE WOULD THINK A MOTHER'D TAKE SOME INTEREST IN HER OWN CHILD, WOULDN'T ONE?

DON'T SPEAK THAT WAY! NOT IN FRONT OF HIM! LATER IF YOU MUST!

AFTER DINNER ALICE LET DAVID CARRY THE BABY UPSTAIRS. WHEN HE CAME DOWN, SHE WAS STANDING BY THE RADIO, LISTENING TO MUSIC SHE WASN'T HEARING...



DAVID, DOES...DOES A BABY KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RIGHT AND WRONG?

NO, BUT IT WILL LEARN. WHY? WHAT ARE YOU DRIVING AT?

SUDDENLY ALICE STOPPED. HER ARMS DROPPED AND SHE TURNED SWIFTLY...



THAT NOISE! IN THERE! IN THE LIBRARY! WHAT WAS IT?

HUH? I DIDN'T HEAR!

DAVID CROSSED THE ROOM, OPENED THE LIBRARY DOOR, AND SWITCHED THE LIGHTS ON AND OFF...

NOT A THING. YOU'RE ... TIRED. G'MON. TO BED WITH YOU... *RIGHT NOW!*

FORGIVE ME, DAVID. I... I AM EXHAUSTED.



TURNING OUT THE LIGHTS TOGETHER, THEY WALKED QUIETLY UP THE SOUNDLESS HALL STAIRS, NOT SPEAKING. ALICE PAUSED, UNDECIDED, BY THE BEDROOM DOOR. THEN, FINGERING THE BRASS KNOB SHARPLY, WALKED IN. DAVID WATCHED HER APPROACH THE CRIB MUCH TOO CAREFULLY, LOOK DOWN, AND STIFFEN AS IF SHE'D BEEN STRUCK IN THE FACE ...



DAVID REACHED THE CRIB AND LOOKED DOWN. THE BABY'S FACE WAS BRIGHT RED AND VERY MOIST BRIGHT BLUE EYES STARED AS IF BEING STRANGLERD OUTWARD ...



DAVID UNDRESSED SILENTLY AND SAT ON THE EDGE OF THE BED SUDDENLY, HE SNAPPED HIS FINGERS.



HE WAS IN BED NOW. SHE DARKENED THE ROOM. HE HEARD HER WALK AROUND THE BED, THROW BACK CRISP SHEETS, AND SLIDE IN ...



BEFORE HE COULD ANSWER...BEFORE HE COULD TELL HER HOW SILLY IT WAS, ALICE SWITCHED ON THE BED LIGHT, ABRUPTLY ...



THE BABY LAY WIDE AWAKE IN ITS CRIB, STARING STRAIGHT AT THEM WITH DEEP SHARP BLUE EYES THE EYES CLOSED. THE LIGHT WENT OUT AGAIN. SHE TREMBLED AGAINST HIM ...



THE AIRPLANE WENT EAST WITH DAVID. THERE WAS A LOT OF SKY, A LOT OF CLOUDS, AND THEN CHICAGO CAME RUNNING OVER THE HORIZON. DAVID WAS DROPPED DOWN INTO A RUSH OF ORDERS, CONFERENCES, PLANNING, BANQUETING. AND THEN, ON HIS SIXTH DAY AWAY, HE RECEIVED A LONG DISTANCE PHONE CALL...

ALICE? NO, DAVE. THIS IS DR. JEFFERS SPEAKING. HOLD ONTO YOURSELF, SON. ALICE IS SICK! YOU'D BETTER GET THE NEXT PLANE HOME. IT'S PNEUMONIA! I'LL DO EVERYTHING I CAN, BOY. IF ONLY IT WASN'T SO SOON AFTER THE BABY! SHE NEEDS STRENGTH!



AFTER DOCTOR JEFFERS LEFT, ALICE CONFIDED IN DAVID...

IT WAS THE BABY, AGAIN, DAVID. I TRIED TO LIE TO MYSELF... CONVINCE MYSELF I'M A FOOL. BUT THE BABY KNEW I WAS WEAK FROM THE HOSPITAL. SO HE CRIED ALL NIGHT. AND WHEN HE WASN'T CRYING, HE'D BE TOO QUIET. IF I SWITCHED THE LIGHT ON, HE'D BE THERE, STARING AT ME.



ONE NIGHT, AFTER THE BABY'S CRIB HAD BEEN MOVED TO THE NURSERY, ALICE WAKENED, TREMBLING, AND SLID INTO HER HUSBAND'S ARMS...

THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE ROOM... WATCHING US!

OH, HONEY! YOU'RE JUST DREAMING!



HE HELD HER UNTIL SHE FELL ASLEEP AGAIN. THEN HE HEARD THE BEDROOM DOOR SWAY OPEN A FEW INCHES. THERE WAS NOBODY AT THE DOOR. NO REASON FOR IT TO COME OPEN. NO WIND...



THE AIRPLANE WENT WEST AND CALIFORNIA CAME UP AND OUT OF THE TWISTING CIRCULAR METAL OF PROPELLERS CAME A VIBRATING SUDDEN MATERIALIZATION OF ALICE LYING IN BED, DR. JEFFERS STANDING AT THE WINDOW, AND THE REALITY OF DAVID BEING THERE AT LAST...

THE BABY WOULDN'T SLEEP. I THOUGHT HE WAS SICK. HE JUST LAY IN THE CRIB STARING. LATE AT NIGHT, HE'D CRY. LOUD. HE'D CRY ALL NIGHT AND ALL NIGHT. I COULDN'T QUIET HIM. I COULDN'T SLEEP!

TIRED HERSELF RIGHT INTO PNEUMONIA, DAVID. BUT SHE'S FULL OF SULFA DRUG NOW, AND SHE'S ON THE SAFE SIDE!



THE NEXT MORNING, DAVID WENT TO SEE DR. JEFFERS AND TOLD HIM THE WHOLE THING, AND LISTENED TO JEFFERS' TOLERANT REPLIES...

...SO ALICE HATES THE BABY!

THE BEST WAY TO PUT IT IS THAT SHE HAS AN OBSESSION. A CEASARIAN OPERATION BROUGHT THE CHILD INTO THE WORLD, AND ALMOST TOOK ALICE OUT OF IT. SHE BLAMES THE CHILD FOR HER NEAR-DEATH AND HER PNEUMONIA. WE ALL DO IT. WE STUMBLE INTO A CHAIR AND CURSE THE FURNITURE, MISS A GOLF STROKE AND BLAME THE CLUB...



HE WAITED. IT SEEMED LIKE AN HOUR HE LAY SILENTLY, IN THE DARK. THEN, FAR AWAY, WAILING LIKE SOME METEOR DYING IN THE VAST INKY GULF OF SPACE, THE BABY BEGAN TO CRY IN HIS NURSERY...



CAREFULLY DISENGAGING ALICE'S GRIP, HE SLIPPED OUT OF BED, PUT ON HIS SLIPPERS, ROBE, AND TIP-TOED OUT OF THE ROOM TO THE STAIRS. THE BLACKNESS DROPPED OUT FROM UNDER HIM. HIS FOOT SLIPPED ON SOMETHING SOFT...SLIPPED AND PLUNGED INTO NOTHINGNESS...



HE THRUST HIS HANDS OUT, CAUGHT FRANTICALLY AT THE RAILING. HIS BODY STOPPED FALLING. HE HELD. HE CURSED. THE 'SOMETHING SOFT' THAT HAD CAUSED HIS FEET TO SLIP, RUSTLED AND THUMPED DOWN A FEW STEPS AND STOPPED. HIS HEAD RANG. HIS HEART HAMMERED AT THE BASE OF HIS THROAT, THICK AND SHOT WITH PAIN. HE PICKED IT UP. HIS HAND FROZE, STARTLED. HIS BREATH WENT IN. HIS HEART HELD ONE OR TWO BEATS. THE THING HE HELD IN HIS HAND WAS A *TOY*...A LARGE CUMBERSOME, PATCHWORK DOLL HE'D BROUGHT AS A *JOKE* FOR...



THE NEXT DAY WENT UNEASILY. HE KEPT SEEING ALICE ALL THE TIME, MIXED INTO EVERYTHING HE LOOKED AT. SO MUCH OF HER FEAR HAD COME OVER TO HIM NOW. SHE ACTUALLY HAD *HIM* CONVINCED THAT THE CHILD WAS SOMEWHAT UNNATURAL... WHAT... WHAT IF I TOLD ALICE ABOUT THAT *TOY* I STUMBLED OVER LAST NIGHT? LORD, WOULDN'T *THAT* SEND HER OFF INTO HYSTERICS! NO, I WON'T *TELL* HER ABOUT THAT. IT WAS JUST AN *ACCIDENT*!



THAT NIGHT, DAVID TOOK A TAXI HOME. AS HE WALKED SLOWLY UP THE CEMENT WALK, ENJOYING THE LIGHT THAT WAS IN THE SKY AND THE TREES, THE WHITE COLONIAL FRONT OF THE HOUSE LOOKED UNNATURALLY SILENT AND UNINHABITED...



ONCE INSIDE, HE PUT HIS HAT ON THE CHAIR WITH HIS BRIEFCASE, STARTED TO SHRUG OFF HIS COAT, THEN LOOKED UP...



LATE SUNLIGHT STREAMED DOWN THE STAIR-WELL FROM THE WINDOW AT THE TOP OF THE HOUSE... ILLUMINATING THE PATCHWORK DOLL THAT SPRAWLED IN A GROTESQUE ANGLE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRS.



ALICE LAY IN A BROKEN, PALLID GESTURING AND ANGLING OF HER THIN BODY. SHE WAS LYING AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRS, LIKE A CRUMPLED DOLL WHO DOESN'T WANT TO PLAY ANY MORE... EVER. ALICE WAS DEAD...



HE HELD HER IN HIS ARMS. BUT SHE WOULDN'T LIVE. SHE WOULDN'T TRY TO LIVE. HE SAID HER NAME OUT LOUD MANY TIMES, BUT IT DIDN'T HELP. SHE WAS DEAD! 5

HE MUST HAVE MADE A PHONE CALL. HE DIDN'T REMEMBER. HE FOUND HIMSELF SUDDENLY, UPSTAIRS, STARING AT THE CRIB. THE BABY'S EYES WERE CLOSED, BUT HIS FACE WAS RED, MOIST WITH PERSPIRATION...



THEN HE STARTED LAUGHING, LOW AND SOFT AND CONTINUOUS FOR A LONG TIME, UNTIL DR. JEFFERS WALKED OUT OF THE NIGHT-TIME AND SLAPPED HIM AGAIN AND AGAIN ACROSS HIS CHEEKS...



IT WAS ELEVEN AT NIGHT. A LOT OF STRANGE PEOPLE HAD COME AND GONE THROUGH THE HOUSE, TAKING THE ESSENTIAL FLAME WITH THEM... ALICE. DAVID SAT ACROSS FROM THE DOCTOR IN THE LIBRARY...



NOW YOU'RE FOLLOWING HER PATTERN. SHE BLAMED THE CHILD FOR HER SICKNESS, NOW YOU BLAME IT FOR HER DEATH. SHE STUMBLED ON A TOY, REMEMBER THAT! YOU CAN'T BLAME THE CHILD!

DAVID SHOOK HIS HEAD...

ALICE HEARD THINGS AT NIGHT. THINGS MOVING IN THE HALLS, AS IF SOMEONE SPIED ON US. YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT THOSE NOISES WERE, DOC? I'LL TELL YOU. THEY WERE MADE BY THE BABY! YES, MY SON! FOUR MONTHS OLD, CREEPING AROUND THE DARK HALLS AT NIGHT...

I WANT YOU TO STOP THIS, DAVID!



WHAT DO WE KNOW OF BABIES, DOCTOR? THE GENERAL KNOWLEDGE, YES. YOU KNOW OF COURSE, HOW BABIES KILL THEIR MOTHERS AT BIRTH. WHY? IN RESENTMENT AT BEING FORCED INTO THIS LOUSY WORLD! BEING FORCED TO VACATE FROM THE PEACE AND SAFETY OF ITS...

DAVID! YOU'RE ALL WRONG! I...



MANY INSECTS ARE SELF-SUFFICIENT WHEN THEY'RE BORN. IN A FEW DAYS, MOST MAMMALS AND BIRDS ARE ADJUSTED. LITTLE MAN-CHILDREN TAKE YEARS TO SPEAK, FALTERING ON RUBBERY LEGS. BUT, SUPPOSE ONE CHILD IN A MILLION IS... STRANGE! BORN PERFECTLY AWARE, ABLE TO THINK INSTINCTIVELY!

BOSH!



WOULDN'T IT BE A PERFECT SET-UP, A PERFECT BLIND FOR ANYTHING THE BABY MIGHT WANT TO DO? HE COULD PRETEND TO BE ORDINARY. WITH JUST A LITTLE EXPENDITURE OF ENERGY, HE COULD CRAWL AROUND A DARK HOUSE, LISTENING. HOW EASY TO CRY ALL NIGHT AND TIRE A MOTHER INTO PNEUMONIA. HOW EASY TO PLACE OBSTACLES AT THE TOP OF STAIRS. HOW EASY, RIGHT AT BIRTH, TO BE SO CLOSE TO THE MOTHER THAT A FEW DEFT MANEUVERS MIGHT CAUSE PERITONITIS... DEATH!

FOR GOD'S SAKE, DAVID! WHAT A REPULSIVE THING TO SAY!



MY LITTLE BOY BABY, LYING IN HIS CRIB NIGHTS, HIS FACE MOIST AND RED AND OUT OF BREATH. FROM **CRYING? NO!** FROM CLIMBING TEDIOUSLY, ACHINGLY SLOW, OUT OF HIS **CRIB**. FROM CRAWLING LONG DISTANCES THROUGH DARKENED **HALLWAYS**. MY LITTLE BOY BABY. I WANT TO **KILL HIM**... SOB...

YOU'RE NOT KILLING **ANYONE!** YOU'RE GOING TO **SLEEP** FOR TWENTY-FOUR HOURS. SLEEP WILL **CHANGE YOUR MIND**. HERE. TAKE THESE **PILLS**...



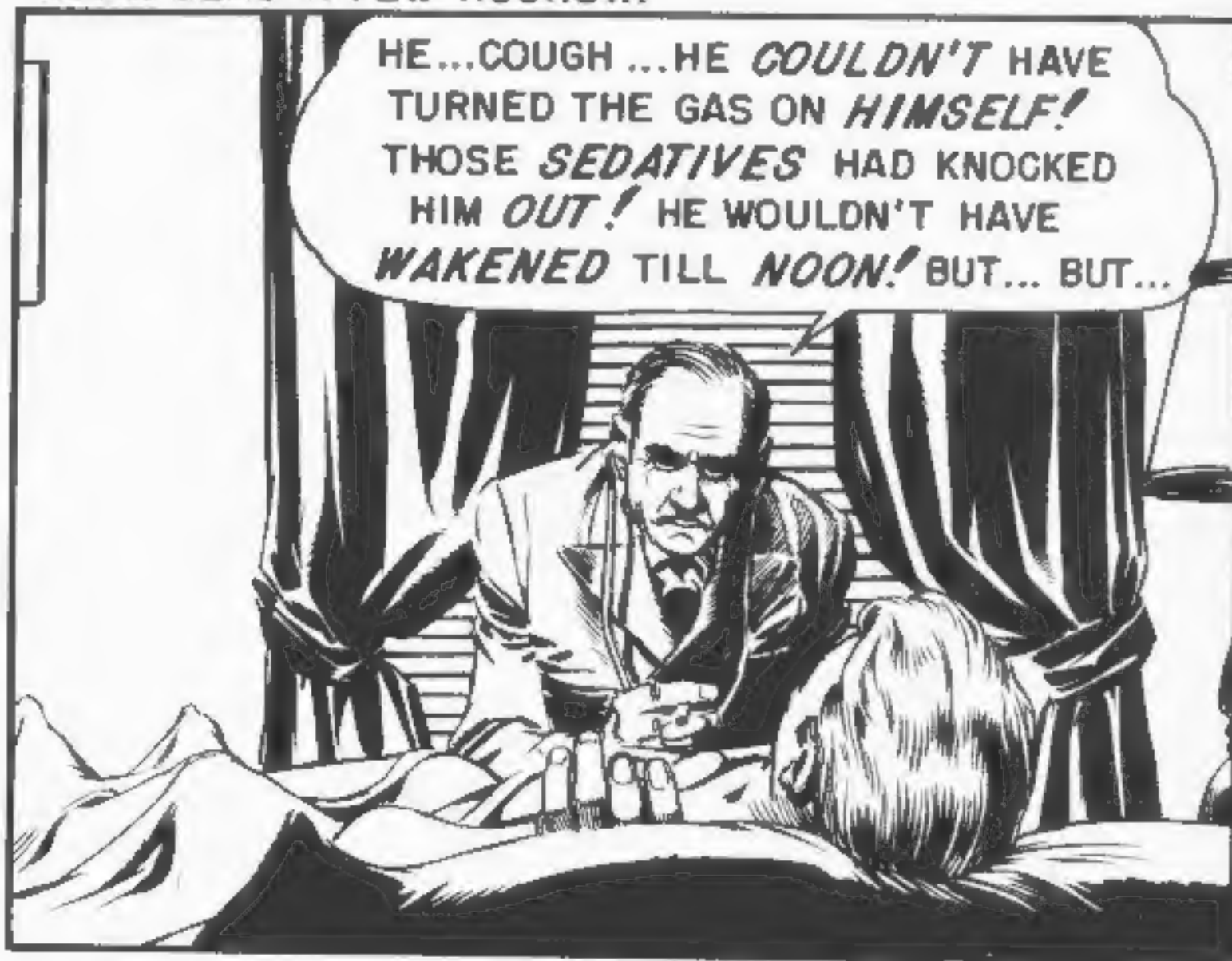
DAVID DRANK DOWN THE PILLS AND LET HIMSELF BE LED UPSTAIRS TO HIS BEDROOM, CRYING, AND FELT HIMSELF BEING PUT TO BED. THE DOCTOR SAID GOOD-NIGHT AND LEFT THE HOUSE. DAVID, ALONE, DRIFTED TOWARD SLEEP. A NOISE...



THE NEXT MORNING, DOCTOR JEFFERS RETURNED AND LET HIMSELF IN. SOMEONE WAS GOING TO HAVE TO LOOK AFTER THE BABY. THERE WAS AN ODOR OF GAS IN THE HOUSE. JEFFERS RAN UP THE STAIRS, CRASHED INTO DAVID'S ROOM...



DAVID WAS DEAD. THE BODY WAS COLD. IT HAD ONLY BEEN DEAD A FEW HOURS...



DR. JEFFERS WALKED TO THE NURSERY. THE DOOR WAS **CLOSED**. HE OPENED IT AND WALKED INSIDE AND OVER TO THE CRIB. THE CRIB WAS **EMPTY**...



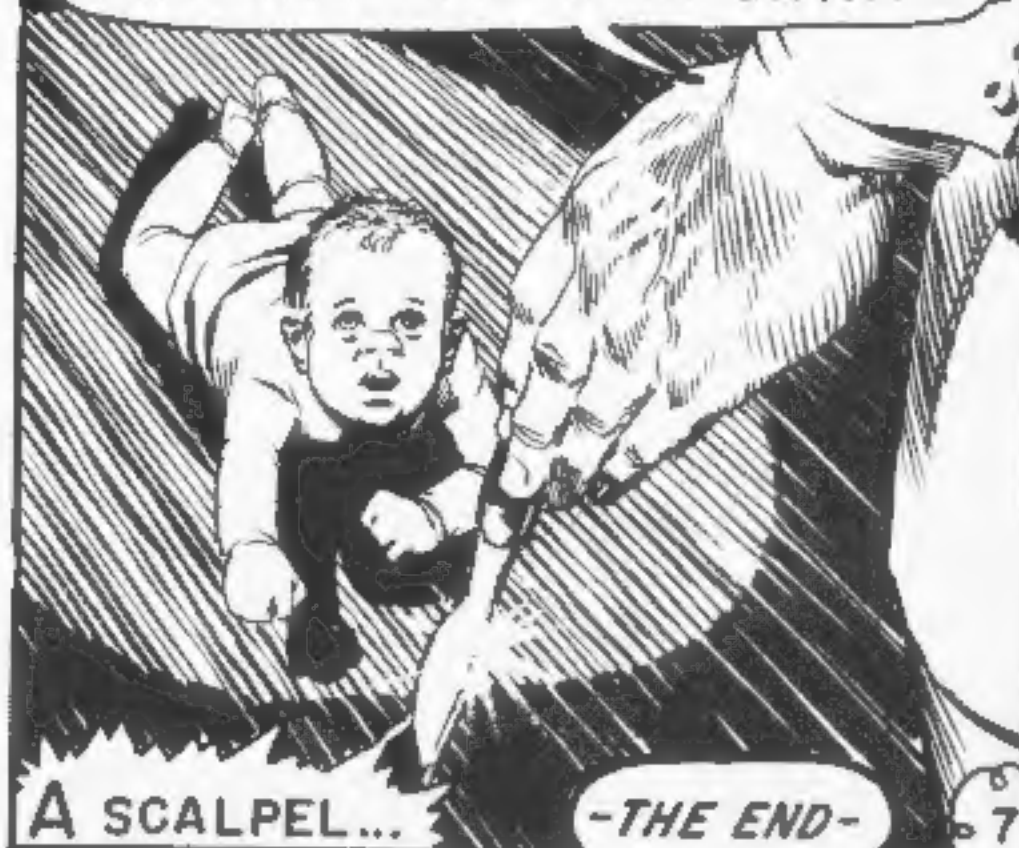
HE OPENED HIS MEDICAL BAG...

A LITTLE THING LIKE A **SLAMMED DOOR** CAN RUIN THE **BEST** OF PLANS. WELL, I'LL **FIND** YOU SOMEWHERE IN THE HOUSE, HIDING...PRETENDING TO BE **SOMETHING** YOU ARE **NOT!**



SOMETHING RUSTLED DOWN THE HALL. SOMETHING SMALL AND VERY QUIET. JEFFERS CAME OUT OF THE NURSERY...

I HAD TO OPERATE TO BRING YOU **INTO** THIS WORLD. NOW I GUESS I CAN OPERATE TO TAKE YOU **OUT** OF... **SEE, BABY?** SOMETHING **BRIGHT!** SOMETHING **SHINY!**



AL FELDSTEIN: *A signature is a signature, and you shouldn't ask anyone to do someone else's handwriting.*

Al Feldstein's exuberantly brutal cover for **Shock #7** was so immediate in its impact that some readers were left wondering "what was going on." They got a partial explanation in the letters page of #9, but what was really "going on" was that Feldstein was at the height of his powers as a writer/editor and knew it. The blistered, screaming face of a man struck by lightning, his back turned to his own reflection, is an apt introduction -- **Caveat lector!** -- to the second year of **Shock's** run.

"Beauty and the Beach" is a highpoint in the remarkable series of lead stories which Feldstein, working from Bill Gaines's springboards, scripted and laid out for Jack Kamen. Feldstein's success with this series is a tribute to his rapport with Gaines (who used the lead stories in **Shock**, beginning with "The Neat Job," to venture into areas of personal feeling previously unexplored in comics) and to his ability to anticipate how Kamen would visualize and dramatize his scripts. "Beauty and the Beach" shapes one of Gaines's pet themes -- the milquetoast husband married to a vain, ambitious wife -- into a deftly-balanced parallel narrative. Pages 4 and 6 are fine examples of Feldstein's emphatically symmetrical page layouts and Kamen's dynamic compositions and spillover effects coming together to create lucid and elegant comics.

"The Bribe" is memorable chiefly for its in-depth portrayal of Inspector Frank Wilson, the first believable villain in a **Shock** preachie since Lieutenant Staley in "Confession" (**Shock #4**). It is also noteworthy that Wallace Wood depicts Wilson as a solid-burgher type -- he is virtually a dead ringer for Murray Voorhees in "So Shall Ye Reap" (**Shock #10**) -- instead of the stock Corrupt Official from central casting.

Considering Bill Gaines's very mixed feelings about young children -- "Halloween" (**Shock #2**) and "Sugar 'n Spice 'n" (**Shock #6**) are representative of his attitude -- it is not hard to understand why Ray Bradbury's fantasies about children as an alien, malevolent life form would appeal to him. The subtle and oppressive mood of horror that pervades EC's adaptation of "The Small Assassin" is largely the result of George Evans's sensitive artwork: almost every panel has a strong horizontal emphasis, we see the sky only in a few brief glimpses on page 6, and every image of the baby or his crib is genuinely terrifying. Surprisingly, Evans was never given another Bradbury story to illustrate.

-- William Mason